PRIMITIVE RELIGION.

C.G.T. OR, A Dying Christians LAST LEGACY IN Words of *Counsel* and Encouragement to a *Godly Life*.

Written on a *Death-bed*, by JOHN CARE, late Minister of *God's Word* at *Speldhurst* and *Pembury* in *Kent*.

To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God, Psalm 50. *Ver.* 23.

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The Publiſher to the Reader.

THE Author of the enſuing Leaves made Chriſt's *School* his Univerſity, and *the Book of God* his chief *Library*; you are not therefore to expect any *Rhetorical flouriſhes* or gawdy Embeliſhments, which moſt times ſerve only to gratifie the Writers *Pride*, or the Readers *Vanity*; the Stile here is *plain* and familiar, ſuited to the meaneſt *Capacities*; yet *grave* and *ſerious*, becoming the *Majeſtick ſimplicity* of the *Goſpel*: the ſcope being to inform the *conſcience*, rather than humor the *fancy*; and to imprint wholſome conſiderations on the *heart*, not to tickle the *ear* with quaint expreſſions, or the harmonious cadencies of *dancing periods*. Frothy brains therefore will here find no *Romantick Language* to pleaſe their liquoriſh palates, nor *inquiſitive heads* any wingy myſteries debated to ſatisfie the Itch of their always *idle*, and moſt-times *impious* curioſity; nor will peeviſh tempers (whoſe Religion is but noiſe, and their devotion wrangling, having too much *gall* to be inſpired by the heavenly Dove) meet here with any little unneceſſary Controverſies magiſterially argued with thoſe tranſports of paſſion which

commonly violate a certain command, and sacrifice Peace and unity to the interests of an uncertain opinion, or some vain Ceremony, so much the *more* violently *contended for*, as 'tis on all hands acknowledged to be *less needful*; But poor-spirited, honest-hearted Christians (who have no *design* in their Religion but to glorifie God and save their own souls) may hence with much comfort gather and store up for themselves not a few savoury *instructions*, sound *directions*, and necessary *cautions* to rouse their drouzy hearts, to support their drooping spirits, to inflame their *affections* to things above, to assist their endeavours after an encrease and growth in *Grace*, to relieve their dangers when *tempted to sin*, and generally to promote their *edification* and eternal welfare.

Should the *black Clouds* that threaten us gather into a *Marian* storm, and *Englands Candlestick* be removed, and your Bibles be prohibited, and the *Gospel* lock't up or banisht, and *Popish darkness* invade us, and *Idolatry* be rampant, and your *Teachers* retire into corners, and stars lose their light. and those that seem'd *Pillars* be shaken, and *thousands fall on the right hand, and ten thousands on the left*, and Protestants be forced to seek the *Bread of Life* in desolate places, and pass the *Ordeal* [the *fiery Tryal*], and discharge a *good conscience* in *Goals* and *Dungeons*, and witness to the truth of God at a *Stake* or a *Gibbet*; how useful! how *valuable then* would such a plain, though

though *ſmall* Treatiſe be! how ſweet a *Compa-nion!* how ſafe a *Guide!* how faithful a *Monitor!* I would not ſlight the *Polemicks*, wherein many have done worthily; nor was there ever Cauſe in the world ſo ſhamefully *baffled* and juſtly triumpht over, as that of the *Papiſts* has been by divers of our ſolid and learned Reformed Writers; but when all is done, 'tis the *practice of ſuch plain Truths* as are here recommended, that muſt *do the work*: we muſt *Believe* down, *Pray* down, *Live* down *Popery*, if ever we expect to be preſerved from it. A right-grounded *Faith*, and an *holy Converſation*, are *Sheet-Anchors* that will endure all ſtreſs of *weather*, and bring us to the Haven of everlaſting happineſs; but *without them* (whether *Popery* come or not) we ſhall certainly be *ſhip-wrackt*, and that eternally.

As for the *following Treatiſe*, it was written in a ſtate of outward *Languiſhment*, when the Author was taken off from being ſerviceable to ſouls in his uſual way of *Preaching*, by a greivous diſtemper, [a Cancer in the throat] which at laſt wrought his *diſſolution*, and through which (even to the end) the gracious hand of *Providence* vouchſaf'd to carry him with an incredible *Patience* and reſignation of Spirit: The laſt words of a *dying man* do certainly challenge our regards, and merit our moſt ſerious attention, but eſpecially truths of God (by what Inſtruments ſoever declared) muſt not be ſlighted. The *words*

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and *method* might eaſily have been *refined*, but the Author himſelf hath made an unanſwerable *Apology* for both, and I durſt not alter any thing in the deceaſed's laſt *Will* and *Teſtament*; thou haſt it therefore juſt as it flow'd from his own Pen, whoſe aim evidently appears to have been to promote *Holineſs* and the good of ſouls: Let us not therefore be wanting to our ſelves, nor *defeat* his pious intentions by our own *negligence* to improve and *apply* what he ſo charitably offers. And may the Lord (from whom alone deſcends *each perfect gift*) cauſe a *bleſſing* to go along with it to every *Reader*, and make it ſo effectual that thereby his own great *Name* may be glorified, and his People *edified*.

The Author's Dedication to the Congregation of Jesus Christ at *Speldhurst* and *Pembury* in the County of *Kent*.

Dearly beloved in our Lord Jesus!

I *Have endeavoured in part to answer your* desires *in giving you a brief Account of what I formerly spake unto you*; *'tis the same in* substance, *though I have not precisely observed the same words*; *it consists of Advice and Directions, from* Six Scriptures *which have a dependence, suitable to a Christian's duties.* First, *As a* Preface *or Introduction, here is presented to you the necessity of diligent* hearing *and heeding Gods precious Word.* Secondly, Doing God's Will, *must follow the hearing his Word*; *and that will appear in the* Third *Particular, because many will meet with* disappointments, *and they only that do God's Will shall enter into the Kingdom. And* Fourthly, *Though many shall miss of life eternal, yet there is a* remnant *who have a blessing of saving* Grace *in them that shall not be destroyed.* Fifthly, *That a state of Grace may be preserved, be advised to breathe after* soul-prosperity. Lastly, *When we have done all we can, we have done less than our duties, and must look to* Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, *for justification and salvation.*

These things I leave with you as a legacy *to do you good when I am gone, & laid to rest in the silent chambers of death*; *if any be not pleased with the rough* unpolisht *form it appears in, I hope they will pass by the infirmities of a* languishing man, *when they consider he had his* pains *to bear, as well as his* work *to do.*

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Let me prevail with you not to do as the manner of too many is, to get a book, turn over *the leaves, and read here and there a little, and then throw it by into some neglected* corner, *and never mind it more*; *I have endeavoured all plainness, that it might be understood by* young ones *that may grow up as* plants *to God*; *I matter not the* Scoffs *of those that must have their Religion dress up with the* frothy wit *of man, for I have long since learnt that the wisdom of this world comes to* nought; *neither have I intended to debate* controversies, *which many times rather tend to divide Christians and break peace, than to godly edifying or building up the body of Christ*; *I intreat you that whatsoever you find here* agreeable *to Gods holy* Word, *let it dwell upon your souls, and be expressed in your* lives; *let not your* Servant for Christ's sake be a witness against you in the day of Christ, *who hath endeavoured to declare unto you the whole counsel of God made known to him*; *be not forgetful of your duties, lest the Lord refuse to know your persons*; *that which I have spoken to you from Gods pure* Word, *and endeavoured to make my* practice *in my life, I have the testimony of a* good conscience for, *now my dissolution is at hand*; *and now that I must give an account to God, my heart doth not* condemn me, *but Gods Word and Spirit witnesseth that it is the* truth of God *that I with you have professed and practised*; *only I have not been so* fruitful *to God in it as I ought to have been*; *yet having full hope of* pardon *and acceptance through the blood of my Saviour, I rest with confidence to obtain a joyful* Resurrection with *the Justified in Christ Jesus*.

JOHN CARE.

SERMON I.

Luke VIII. 18.

Take heed therefore how you hear.

HIS *Caution* of our Lord hath dependance on the precedent words, where he is ſhewing the *Cauſe*, why the word of Truth takes no more *effect*, when preached in the *power of the Spirit*, *viz.* Becauſe of the *indiſpoſed frame* it finds men in, who through *corruption*, and yeilding to temptation, procure to their ſouls a *dying ſtate* under ſaving means; to prevent which, our *heavenly Prophet* gives ſpecial counſel to all that have an Ear to hear, to give diligent heed unto the *means* of Grace, as one chief way to obtain that good ſtate, compared to *good ground*.

This Caution, *Take heed*, yeilds us this Observation:

Doctrine 1. *That a heedful mind is necessary, as well as a hearing Ear.*

Thus the Lord appoints the Prophet, to be careful when he commands him to *receive in his heart, and hear with his ear all his words*, Ezek. 3. 10. Wherein such an expres charge is imposed, to receive in the *heart* what he heard, as intimates a very *great attention* requisite: so *Deut.* 6. 6. *The words which I command thee shall be in thy heart:* This Lesson blessed *David* had learned, when he said, *Thy word have I hid within my heart:* And *Peter* informs them to whom he was preaching the Gospel, That *their minds must be gird up to receive, and patiently wait* in the performance of their duty, and expectation of the *promises*; It is implied, That the cause why the Church of the *Hebrews* wanted a second Teaching of formerly-taught Truths, was because their *senses* were not so exercised in those things that they had heard, as to *retain* them, and *be quickned thereby*, Hebr. 5. 12, & 14.

Now several *Reasons* there are why the mind ought to be thus heedful. As,

Reason 1. Because it is the mind that must be *renewed:* It is a special work of the Word to *renew the mind*, Rom. 12. 2. & 7. 25. As the strength of the body is renewed by its daily

food,

food, ſo the *word* (by which a Chriſtian lives, and not by *bread alone*) doth from day to day renew and *nouriſh* the inward man, whereby the ſoul is changed into a more *ſpiritual frame*, and minds the *things of the ſpirit*, Rom. 8. Therefore ſince the mind is to have a choice *priviledg* by the word, it is moſt neceſſary that it ſhould be exerciſed with much *heedfulneſs*.

Reaſ. 2. The mind and will of the mighty and *eternal God*, is by his *word* conveyed into our mind, 1 *Cor.* 2. 16. 2 *Pet.* 3. 1. That our inward man being renewed like new veſſels, may be as a Store-houſe of knowledg of thoſe Divine Truths, that furniſh the creature to ſerve the Lord with underſtanding.

Reaſ. 3. Becauſe the mind is to *keep* what is committed to it, 1 *Cor.* 15. 2. *Jude* 17. *Deut.* 11. 18. which charge cannot be kept, except the mind be ſo *heedful* in receiving with all diligence, and obſerving with the *whole heart* every word of Truth.

Reaſ. 4. Becauſe the mind is liable to be *corrupted*, therefore it ought to be heedful to prevent the danger of being polluted and deceived, 2 *Cor.* 11. 3. 2 *Tim.* 3. 8.

Reaſ. 5. It is the mind that wants to be *eſtabliſhed* and comforted, 1 *Theſ.* 3. 13. and 5. 14. So that it is of great uſe to give earneſt heed to that comforting and *ſupporting word*,

that we be not as Children *toſſed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine*, but ſtand faſt in the Truth, rejoycing therein as one that hath found great riches.

Reaſ. 6. The *heart*, and not the *ear* is the ground where the ſeed of the word takes root, thence to ſpring up in a *life fruitful in every good word and work*, Mark 4. 20.

All which and much more might be ſaid, to *prove* and convince ſouls of the neceſſity of heedful attention, pondering the word in our hearts with all *carefulneſs*, and not to let it ſlip out of our ſouls, leſt we prove our hearts bad *thorny*, *ſtony* ground.

Uſe 1. Is it ſo then, that a heedful mind is of neceſſity to attain proficiency under *Goſpel-means*, and to further creatures to eternal life? This ſhould teach us to *disburthen* our ſelves from worldly Incumbrances, which keep the heart from diligent attention, and take up ſo much *room* therein, that the word cannot enter, nor take that *Impreſſion* to quicken and enliven; and then the creature complains it doth *not profit* to its ſatisfaction, when the true cauſe may be a croud of *worldly thoughts* wherewith the mind is ſtuffed, and which are not baniſht from within, when we come to be imimployed in a great work, and ſhould have brought *empty veſſels* prepared to lay up a

word

word of life in for our ſouls; for the *cares of this world, the deceitfulneſs of riches, and pleaſures of this life, choak the word, and it becomes unfruitful*, Matth. 12. 22.

We ſhould practice Three Duties to help us herein.

1. *Soul-preparation*, not to carry our *bodies* into Gods preſence until our ſouls be prepared and moulded into a Chriſtian *frame* of ſpiritual deſires and hungrings after the power of Gods word upon them as a *ſaving word* of eternal life, *Job* 11. 13. *Pſal.* 42. 1.

2. *Watchfulneſs* over our wandering thoughts and drowſie frame of ſpirit, whereby the heart is either carried away from a heedful attention, or ſo dulled, that it miſſeth its portion of that heavenly food, *Acts* 20. 31.

3. *Soul-Application*, when ſin is reproved, and duty enjoyned, the heart applies it home, conſidering whether it be not *guilty* of thoſe ſins, and one of thoſe that neglect that *duty*; Let us ſet our hearts to work in a ſerious Meditation, what word of *Reproof*, or *Caution*, *Councel*, or *Exhortation* and *Comfort* belongs to us, *John* 17. 8.

Uſe 2. If heedfulneſs be of neceſſity, this ſhould teach us to exerciſe our hearts *in a daily Meditation*, that what we hear may dwell and remain in us, *Joſh.* 1. 8. One cauſe why the Word proves unfruitful, is becauſe the enemy

ſteals it away; and how can a ſoul but loſe it, when it heeds it only in the time of hearing? But being gone, amongſt worldly affairs, lets ſlip what was ſhewed from the Word; it is a good frame of heart, when Gods *work is a doing in the heart, when our work is a doing with the hands*; when ſecular imployments and worldly converſe do not ſtop the ſprings of ſoul-cheriſhing Meditations, nor *cloud* the mind by preſenting carnal Objects, and fruitleſs Diſcourſes, which are apt to *fetter* the reſolutions which the word raiſed in the heart.

Uſe 3. This reproves all ſuch as hear more out of *Cuſtom* than *Conſcience*: It may be Conſcience will not be ſatisfied without ſomething done upon the account of Religion, and ſo they *hear* and *read*, becauſe ſuch as neglect thoſe things, are concluded to be *without Religion*: But did their ſilenced conſciences but demand what *ſolid experience* of ſpiritual benefit they have gained from the word; what daily *growth* in vertue, or zeal to Gods glory, working in their hearts a *godly fear* of offending, and a ſincere *deſire* to pleaſe the Lord; too many that have the priviledg to hear, could give but a *cold reply*, and ſorry account of any real ſoul-advantage obtained by what they have heard.

Uſe 4.

Use 4. This exhorts us *to examine* whether we have diligently heeded what we have heard, which may be discerned by our *increase* in knowledg, and *growth in grace*; by the manner of our performing duties; by the discovery of, and *mortifying sin*; for if these things be not found in us, we have heard to *our loss*; to judgment, rather than *benefit*, *Ezek.* 33. 31.

Doctrine 2. *That Gods word is of such great worth and use, that it deserves our best attention*, Jer. 23. 29. Psal. 119. 140. John 17. 17. Acts 20. 32. 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

That Gods word is so excellent, that it requires and deserves our best *attention*, is generally acknowledged by all professing *Christians*, and yet generally *neglected*, and made as their *last work* to attend to it, and conform their lives to the will of God therein contained; and yet 'tis most evident, that it is exceeding useful to poor dark and undone creatures, to bring them to a state of Light and Grace, and guide them to *Glory*.

Reason 1. First it deserves our best attention, because it is the *Will* of the greatest Majesty sent from Heaven to man, *John* 12. 49. *Hebr.* 12. 25.

Reaſ. 2. The word of God *indures for ever:* an intereſt in the promiſes therein recorded, is everlaſting, *Iſa.* 40. 8. *Pſal.* 119. 89.

Reaſ. 3. It is a *quickning means*, or inſtrument of life, by which the Lord brings dead creatures to a living ſtate, *Pſal.* 119. 50. 1 *Pet.* 1, 23. *Epheſ.* 2. 2.

Reaſ. 4. In as much as man is become dark in his underſtanding, he wants a *guide* to direct to that enlightned ſpiritual life; to live by faith, and thereby obtain Juſtification through the blood of Jeſus. Now this Divine Word is a *lamp* to give us light, that we ſhould be *no longer in darkneſs, but light in the Lord*, Pſal. 119. 105. Epheſ. 5. 8.

Hence then,

Uſe. 1. Let us *ſtand in awe* of Gods word, *Pſal.* 119. 161. ſo as not to ſin, *Pſal.* 4. 4. This holy Awe keeps the ſoul within *Chriſtian bounds*, ſo that it dares not do as others who know not the power of that *heavenly Oracle*, nor the *wrath of God* for the breach thereof: Gracious ſouls *tremble*, and are afraid before the Lord when they ſee his Law *violated*, and his word diſobeyed, *Ezra* 9. 4. And God promiſeth to appear to their joy that ſo *tremble at his word*, Iſa. 66. 5

Uſe 2.

Uſe 2. Doth the word require our beſt attention, then let it not offend you when it comes *home to your ſouls*, and hath to do with *boſom-corruptions*, when it finds out your *Delilah*, and ſtrikes at the beloved ſin; for then if you will receive it, it will do you moſt *good*, like phyſick, that then operates moſt *kindly* when it ſets upon, and diſlodges the *principal peccant humor*: It was beſt for *David* when *Nathan ſet his ſin before him*, and charged him home, *Thou art the man*, 2 Sam. 12. 7. Oh! if ever you would do your ſouls good, you muſt apply the *cloſeſt means* without offence, *Hebr.* 13. 22. Indeed it too often proves, as in *Ahab*; if men are dealt with *truly* and *plainly*, they are ready to judg them their *enemies* that do ſo, and hate them for their good will, and Gods good word, becauſe it toucheth their *ſore*, and would heal them, 1 *Kings* 22. 8.

Uſe 3. Let us be cautioned when the Lord gives his word, which is to them that improve it, the *ſavour of life unto life*, that we make it not the *ſavour of death unto death*, by our cold *careleſs attention*, ſo as to dye or harden under the vivifying ſoul-melting means of life; 'tis a mortal *Symptom* when perſons read and hear with *frozen* hearts, and delight to remain where *conſcience* may be kept *aſleep*,

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where there is leaſt awakening with a *loud call* to ſhew them their ſins, when a *Boanerges* is too hot for their cold ſtomacks; Oh take heed of this *Soul-Lethargy*, this deadly diſeaſe of a *dull heart*; and to eſcape it, beware,

1. Of a careleſs ſupine *negligent hearing*, Hebr. 5. 11. Attend for your lives, your eternal life depends on it.

2. Of a *negligent keeping*, be not *leaking veſſels*, Hebr. 2. 1.

3. Let not your ſouls go from Gods word without being renewed with good *reſolutions*, raiſed in *endeavours* after the doing the will of God, *Luke* 12. 47.

Many Conſiderations there are which may be Motives to this duty.

Motive 1. The exceeding *ill conſequence*: if the means be neglected whereby faith is wrought and nouriſhed in the ſoul, no leſs than *eternal ruine* follows, 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. *John* 12. 48.

Mot. 2. This attention we recommend, is one *chief means* to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; 'Tis ſad to ſee a *ſullen Child* ſtarve at his Fathers table, where there is *food* enough, but he will not take the pains to eat it; but how much more miſerable a condition is it, that when the

the Lord *bounteouſly* provides the Milk of the word to feed our ſouls to life-eternal, and we have it brought to our ears, and are intreated to receive it, and yet we will not take it in, nor *ruminate* upon it ſo as it may nouriſh us, but will ſit like *ſtocks* or pillars, and barely hear it, and ſo ſtarve, and dye, and periſh; may not God in ſuch caſe ſay moſt juſtly as of old to *Iſrael*, *Thy deſtruction is of thy ſelf: I would have ſanctified and ſaved thee, but thou wouldſt not*, Hoſ. 13.9. Pſal. 81.12,13. Therefore take heed what, and how you hear, that your ſouls may live.

Mot. 3. An attentive hearing demonſtrates *a ſoul to be of God*; He that *is of God, heareth Gods word*, John 8. 47. So ſaith the beloved diſciple, He that *knoweth God, heareth us*; *he that is not of God, heareth us not*, 1 Joh. 4. 6. Theſe days afford *many*, which very confidently call out, *Come with us, we are of God*. And many poor honeſt ſouls are in a ſtraight where, and how to ſerve the Lord *acceptably*. Now the Lord hath put this doubt out of doubt, by declaring poſitively, that they are of God that hear his Word, what name or term of *reproach* ſoever they go under, or however men ſcandalize or *vilifie* them, yet the Lord calls them *his*; and if he own them, who is to judg them, it matters very little

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what judgment the *world* passes on them; vain men may fondly imagine themselves to be of God, because they are called *Christians*, and have got a cold, dull, formal profession instilled into them by *custom* and *education*, though yet they are careless of keeping his word, nay dare break his *Law*, change his *Ordinances*, live in *sin*, and hate Religion in the *power* of it; but Christ tells them otherwise, if they will but believe him, rather than their deceitful hearts, and misguided consciences; and they will one day find the sad consequences of that *fatal Error*; let not souls mistake, every one is not of God, that so heareth, as to take up some *Truths* meerly upon an opinion, or conviction, that those things are *true*; but those that in godly sincerity *obey* from the heart, and practise his holy Word.

Mot. 4. Consider the transcendent Excellency of the Word; 'tis *the power of God unto salvation, able to build up, and give an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified, and makes the man of God perfect to every good work*, Rom. 1. 16. Act. 20. 32. 2 Tim. 3. 17. Is not this sufficient to bespeak our *best attention*, and challenge our chiefest regard? what is there under Heaven that is of such worth and value? 'Tis our *Magazine*, whence we may plenteously provide spiritual *Armour* to repel all

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the fiery darts of Satan; our *Phyſick-ſhop*, where we may have both *Antidotes* and *Reſtoratives*, Cordial promiſes to ſtrengthen *fainting hearts*, and healing *medicines* to cure *wounded ſpirits*: In brief, what excellent thing do we want, but here is a ſupply? 'Tis that whereby we *live*; Water and Air are not ſo uſeful, nor the light of the Sun ſo neceſſary: Oh then, let Souls *ſtudy* it, and not think much ro ſpend much time in *reading*, *hearing* and *meditating* on it, and to throw away all *vain books* that tend only to nurſe up *vice*, and draw away the heart from God, *prophane Stories*, wanton *Romances*, and idle *Playbooks*, the *Excrements of abuſed wit*, corrupting manners, and debauching *youth*; Oh what a ſad account will theſe yeild to them that waſte their precious *time*, and imploy their *wit* and reaſon (given them by God to be improved in working out their own *ſalvation*, and ſerving his pure and glorious Majeſty) in compoſing and *ſtudying* ſuch *lying vanities*? Let all therefore that regard their Souls eternal welfare be perſwaded to let theſe *fleſh-pleaſing trifles* dye under the hands of their own *idle Authors*; and let your hands hold *the Book of God*, and fill your *hearts*, and ſatiate your *ſouls* with the ineſtimable riches of its *Treaſures*; ſo ſhall you have *true felicity*,

city, and be crowned with compleat and *undecaying pleasures*; your mirth shall know no *end*, but your joys still remain fresh and flourishing at their full height, when all the empty vanities of this *deceitful world* shall be buried in the *grave* of their own *shame*.

SERMON

SERMON II.

Phil. II. 12.

Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling.

THE *Philipians* are here exhorted to a work incumbent on Christians that profess to own the same Lord that humbled himself unto death; that love which moved him so to do, the Apostle sets before them to incourage them to their duties; That as he had a state of *humiliation* before his exaltation above every name; so the members of that body whereof he is the Head must have their humbled state, and *low* condition, being lookt upon *as the filth of the world*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 13. And whilest others that will not have him to reign over them are wallowing in voluptuousness, or sacrificing to their covetous or ambitious designs, and treasuring up *wrath against the day of wrath*: These must be laying up a good foundation against the time to come, even working out their own salvation; and then having *suffered*, they shall *reign*, and

and appear with him in glory when he ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints, *Col.* 3. 2. Now this life is our working-day; the *Sabbath* will come, that great *Jubilee*, when the Trumpet ſhall ſound a *Quietus* to the Saints, and proclaim the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, and all that have their names inrolled in the Book of Life ſhall enter into everlaſting reſt; but we muſt paſs the *Wilderneſs* before we can gain admittance into this *Canaan*; we muſt *run* if we would *obtain*; we muſt fight the good fight before we can expect this *Crown*; we muſt be working out our ſalvation here, if we would enjoy it hereafter.

Three things in general are preſented in theſe words:

1. The *weight* of this work.
2. Some *preparations*: A great work cannot be accompliſhed without due preparations.
3. The *work it ſelf*, that the Apoſtle intends.

Firſt, to demonſtrate this to be a *great and weighty work*. Obſerve,

Demonſtration 1. Mans Salvation, according to the Decrees of Heaven, was deſigned by God in all his chief works done for man

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from the foundation of the world: in the giving of a righteous *Law*, the Lord diſcovered unto man the *exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin*, that he might not periſh in it, but know himſelf an undone creature, and ſo by a School-maſter be brought unto Chriſt, *Rom.* 7. 13. *Gal.* 3. 24. In that ineſtimable gift of his Son, his ſcope was Mans Salvation; for he ſent not his Son into the world to *condemn the world, but that the world through him might be ſaved*, John 3. 17. He being the Lamb of God that taketh away the ſins of the world by the ſacrifice of himſelf, whereby a word of peace was preached, which did tend to Salvation, *Act.* 13. 26. *Epheſ.* 2. 17. Which *word* being received, begets *Faith* in the heart, and humbles the ſoul by true *repentance* to life; which faith and repentance are proved by a through change of heart and life from evil to good, when ſin is hated, and the commands of God obeyed, and then the *Spirit* of God is promiſed, *Prov.* 1. 23. which was experienced by Believers, *Eph.* 1. 13. which the Lord obtained and accompliſhed when he aſcended, and led captivity captive, and received gifts for men: Thus we ſee all theſe great Works of God for man, when he gave him a Law, ſent him a Saviour, and promiſed him his Holy Spirit, do all concenter and deſign to accompliſh Mans Salvation.

Demonſtr. 2. The beginning of this work makes joy in Heaven, even when a ſinner *repents*, which is one of the firſt ſteps to Life, *Luke* 15. 7. It muſt be a thing of weighty concernment which makes thoſe bleſſed *Intellectual Eſſences* clap their wings and rejoice; for their principles being more *pure* than mans in his fallen ſtate, their love centers not alone in ſelf-concerns, but delights to look with admiration into the work of mans *redemption*, and to miniſter unto them that ſhall be *heirs of ſalvation*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. *Heb.* 1. 14. And as they attended on our Lord when he was here below in the likeneſs of a man, *Mat.* 4. 11. *Luke* 22.43. So when he ſhall appear again, they ſhall gather his *Elect* with all readineſs, that they may be with them in Glory, *Mat.* 24. 31.

Demonſtr. 3. The beſt and wiſeſt men in all ages made it their *chief work*: Thus the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* informs us, That all thoſe primitive *Hero's* and worthy Elders were ſtrangers on the earth, and made it their main Imployment to ſeek a *City above*, whoſe Builder was God; and died in Faith, that they ſhould enjoy it, *Heb.* 11. 13. *Job*, who feared God and was accepted, made it his chief buſineſs to keep Gods Law, *Job* 23. 12. So did *David* likewiſe, and *Paul*, and all the Saints, *Pſal.* 18. 22. *Phil.* 3. 20.

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4. *Demonſtr.* The greateſt *Promiſes* in all Gods Book, are made to them that by faith, love and holy obedience, are working out their Salvation. It is therefore a work of concernment; The Lord bids the Prophet aſſure the righteous that it ſhall be *well with them*, Iſa. 3. 10. The time when this comfortable meſſage was ſent, was when the Lord was declaring great judgments, as appears from the firſt *verſe* to the tenth; yet that no tidings might diſquiet a godly Soul, in the midſt of threatning he proclaims ſafety to the righteous: The promiſe of Gods preſence, which is an unſpeakable priviledg, is to them, *John* 14. 23. *Rev.* 3. 20. And as he will be with them here, ſo ſhall they only be with him in glory hereafter for evermore; For only he ſhall enter into Heaven, that *doth* the will of God which is in Heaven, *Matt.* 7. 21. And none but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.

5. *Demonſtr.* All that in this life are not imployed in this work according to the means allowed them, are under the dreadful *threatnings* of *woe* and *miſery* for evermore; He that ſaith he ſhall have *peace*, and yet walketh in the imaginations of his own heart, all the *curſes* that are written in the Book ſhall lye upon him, *Deut.* 29. 20. And *Indignation and wrath ſhall be upon every one that doth evil*, Rom. 2. 8.

And the Lord ſhall be *revealed from Heaven in flaming fire, rendring vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt.*

Thus we ſee this working out our Salvation is of *infinite moment* and neceſſity; now the greater a work is, the more need there is of *preparations* to it; the more difficulties it meets with, the more we ſhould labour after ſpiritual advantages. *Jehoſhaphat* is commended that there were ſome good things in him, in that *he prepared himſelf to ſeek the Lord*, 2 Chron. 19. 3. And he that prepares himſelf to ſerve the Lord, his age ſhall be clearer *than the noon-day, he ſhall ſhine forth as the morning*, Job 11. 17.

Let me therefore preſent you with a few Rules preparative to a Salvation-work.

1. *Serioufneſs of Spirit*; To be really pondering and ſetting our hearts in good earneſt on the duties of Religion; as devout *Cornelius*, when he intended to cloſe in with Gods Counſel, was ſerious about ſo weighty a matter, and ſolemnly, with his religious Friends, waited for an anſwer from the Lord; and when *Peter* came, readily ſaid to him, *We are all here before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God*, Act. 10. 33. This ſerious preparation had a bleſſed event, even the gift of the Holy-Ghoſt, *Verſe* 44.

2. *Rule*,

2. *Retired meditation*, is a good preparation to a work of Grace; the heart muſt be called back from worldly rovings, to mind the end of its Creation, that it was not to buy and ſell, to eat and drink, much leſs to riot and wantonize, to dote on the world, and live to the fleſh, but to ſerve the Lord in ſpirit and truth; to be mortifying ſin, and getting grace to ſanctifie the heart, that body and ſpirit might be preſented a living Sacrifice holy and acceptable, *Rom.* 12. 1. *David* did experience that meditation was a preparation to heavenly wiſdom, *Pſal.* 119. 99. And *Paul* commands *Timothy* for the better performing his duty, to exerciſe his meditation, 1 *Tim.* 4. 15. That Soul that doth not conſider his ways, and meditate on his own ſtate, and Gods Word, is not ſenſible of the danger of his condition, but goeth like an Oxe to the ſlaughter, not knowing but that all is well, till it drop into perdition. *Job* 34. 27. *Hoſea* 7. 2.

3. We muſt get a *high eſteem of vertue and faith, of godlineſs and a holy life*; for if we admit to lodge in us any ſlight or low thoughts of Gods Law, or any particular precept thereof, it will be ſuch a Remora or ſtop that whilſt it remains, our progreſs will be but ſlow and faint, nothing will be done to any purpoſe; it ſhews the mind is not yet upon heavenly things; if it were, all Gods Law would appear

with raviſhing beauty, and admirable excellency, which would bring the ſoul to value it at no leſs rate than *David*, Pſal. 119. 127. or *Moſes*, who eſteemed the very reproach caſt on them that follow Gods Commands, greater riches than the treaſures of *Egypt*, Heb. 11.26. How can Souls be fitted to ſerve the Lord, when they account his ways wherein they ſhould ſerve him *mean* and contemptible, and their hearts ſecretly deſpiſe them? That Soul is not yet prepared to work out its Salvation, that ſets a greater eſteem on the worlds gilded baits and painted glories, pleaſures, riches, or honour, than on the ways and ordinances of God, which are the paths that lead to the treaſures of Eternity, and never-fading regions of felicity.

4. When we are preparing for this great work, *we muſt ſearch out the ſecret ſins*, ranſack the privy cloſets and remoteſt receſſes of the heart, find out that natural filth that lodgeth there, that *hidden pride* that will not let us obey thoſe ſelf-denying Goſpel-Commands, that *ſecret covetouſneſs* that is ſcarce willing to part with any thing, much leſs with all things for Chriſt, thoſe *private luſts* that whiſper in our boſoms, and tell us the way of life is too ſtrait, we cannot go therein; theſe Vipers we muſt find out and cruſh, theſe Cockatrices we muſt deſtroy. The Lord ſpeaks to *Iſrael*, that

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when they ſhould be in a returning ſtate, they ſhould remember their own evil ways and *loath themſelves*, Ezek. 36. 31. So when the Miniſters of the Goſpel were preparing a people for Salvation, they firſt endeavoured to bring them to a ſight of ſin, and to humiliation for it, to repentance, which is to forſake it, and clear themſelves of *old Leaven*, that they might be a new lump; for it is impoſſible to ſerve the Lord acceptably, ſo long as there remains a habit of old unmortified corruptions; And this is one Reaſon that there are ſo many *dead Branches* amongſt congregated Churches, becauſe they have been perſwaded with much earneſtneſs to come into Communion in *viſible Ordinances*, before ſin was ſufficiently ſearched after, found out and crucified: Therefore let all that would have perſons prepared, before admitted bring them to be throughly aſhamed of their ſin, before they ſhew them the *pattern of the houſe*, Ezek. 43. 11. ſo as to let them into the ſame.

Doct. 3. The third particular to be conſidered is, *The work that the ſpirit intends.* The Exhortation is large, and comprehends *Chriſtian Duties.* I ſhall ſum up what I ſhall ſpeak to it, in Three Heads:

1*ſt.* A Soul-ſaving, purifying, juſtifying *Faith.*

2*dly*. A daily work of watchfulneſs and *mortification*.

3*dly*. To *follow God* as dear and obedient Children, and walk in all well-pleaſingneſs with him.

Firſt, Faith is the *grounded Apprehenſion of things unſeen*; the Evidence of things hoped for; it hath a ſure *foundation*, the Lord God Almighty, and his Son Jeſus Chriſt is the object we believe in: For an inſtrument to convey Faith to the Soul and faſten it there, we have a ſure and moſt certain *word of promiſe*, 2 Pet. 1. 19. There is a Believing that *God is*, and *Chriſt is*; and there is a believing that we ſhall be *ſaved by him*, the Soul accepting Chriſt and reſting on him for Life; this is bottom'd on the faithfulneſs of God, who ſaith, That *whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not periſh but have everlaſting life*, Joh. 3. 16. To believe that we, our particular perſons ſhall be ſaved, is a *Reflex* Act of Faith, and hath its foundation partly on *Gods word*, and partly on *Gods work* in the Soul: when they are made ſenſible of a ſtate of regeneration and perſeverance wrought in them, through Grace, being juſtified by Faith, they have peace with God; they believe they ſhall be ſaved, for they feel their Souls purified; they walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit; they believe they ſhall reap in mercy, for they know that they have

have ſown in *righteouſneſs*; and finding their Souls firmly joyned to the Lord, they have a moſt ſweet Communion, and Soul-refreſhing fellowſhip in all his *Ordinances*, and conclude that nothing ſhall ſeparate them from Chriſt, *Rom.* 8. 39.

Now this Faith is no *Fancy*, not an Hiſtorical probability, not only a credible *notion*, or plauſible yet groundleſs *conceit*; no 'tis a *certainty*, thence called the *aſſurance of Faith*, more ſure than any demonſtration; for 'tis an infallible truth that God will make good his Word: 'Tis true, there is in too many *a fancy*, that is taken for *Faith*, whereby their poor ſouls are deceived; That is, when men believe they ſhall be *ſaved* and are not *ſanctified*, when they expect to *reſt* with Chriſt that would not *work* with Chriſt, ſuch as ſay they do not fear but they ſhall go to Heaven, and yet never had their *Converſation in Heaven*; who hope to dwell with Saints in Heaven, and yet trample on, and deſpiſe the name and *properties* of Saints on Earth; walking in the ſinful ways of the *multitude*, yet conceiting they ſhall be of Chriſts *little flock*, whoſe Fathers will it is to give them the Kingdom, though the Father himſelf ſaith, ſuch as theſe perſons really are, ſhall not enter into his Kingdom, 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. Alas! how deplorably are theſe creatures deceived! As the Heathens made no paſſage into

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the Temple of *Honour* but through that of *Virtue*; ſo there is no entrance but through *Grace* into *Glory*. Is the Word of God true? Then no *unclean* thing ſhall enter into the new *Jeruſalem*. And what then is the Belief of theſe men? No other but a lye, a meer fancy, and moſt dangerous cheat; for 'tis a woful ſtate to be given over to *believe a lye*, 2 Theſ. 2. 11.

Secondly, In order to the working out of our Salvation, there muſt be a watchful work of *Mortification*, of which work the Scripture ſaith, *Mortify your members which are on the Earth*; and the Grace of God that brings Salvation hath appeared, *teaching us to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*, Col. 3. 5. Tit. 2. 12. One of the firſt works of Grace in a Soul, is to diſcover ſin to be an *enemy*; the next, to *deal with it* as an enemy, to watch over it, leſt it ſecretly and deceitfully murther your ſouls, when you are a ſleep in ſecurity, and thou awake not until God have given thee over to dye in thy ſins, and ſo diſcern not thy condition till thou art ſummoned to judgment: They that are Chriſts have *crucified the fleſh*, with the affections and the luſts thereof, *Gal.* 5. 24.

A Soul in this work of Mortification, gets a willingneſs to be rid of *all ſin*, without hideing or extenuating it; and a reſolution to do Gods work, when he is hewing down every

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imagination that exalts it ſelf againſt Chriſt. A well mortifying Soul will not ſuffer any known ſin to reign one hour, leſt it ſhould be its *laſt* hour, or its *hardening* hour; he dares not diſpleaſe his God, by permitting his enemy (that he hates) to raign where the Lord alone ſhould rule, leſt the Lord ſhould withdraw himſelf in his Grace; for the Lord is a *jealous God* and will not be mocked, *Joſh.* 24. 19. There is in every regenerate Soul a ſpiritual warfare between fleſh and ſpirit, *Gal.* 5. 17. And he that *overcometh* ſhall inherit all things, *Rev.* 21. 7.

But what, alas! what do thoſe for their Souls, that will not be exhorted nor intreated from the crooked ways of ſin? They are even treaſuring up wrath againſt the day of wrath. If any be ſo bold, to tell ſome men of their ſins, and prove to their faces, that they will be their eternal ruine in the end; their only amendment is to *hate their Reprovers* and Admoniſhers; Tell others, and they will *excuſe* their ſins, and tell you they are *no ſins*, their Pride is only *neatneſs* and decency, their Covetouſneſs, *good husbandry*, *&c.* or at leaſt they are but *little* venial ſins, tricks of youth or good-fellowſhip, and *others do as bad* or worſe, and therefore they hope they ſhall do well enough; Some being reproved, will be ſo modeſt as to *promiſe to leave them*, but they never

never ſet about the work, but go on day after day till *all* their days are gone, and when the *night* of death (wherein no man can work) is come upon them, their work is undone; all theſe are in a woful caſe and much to be lamented.

Thirdly, To *walk with God*, Mic. 6. 8. In all his Commandments and appointments that he hath required his people to walk in, and ſo ſhew forth their willing obedience. When the Lord called his ancient people to partake of ſpecial benefits, he called *Moſes* out of *Midian*, and all *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, that together Gods Congregation might go to *Canaan*, there to worſhip God according to his Law, and no *uncircumciſed* perſon muſt eat of their Paſſover; but they under that diſpenſation of the *Old Teſtament* were gathered by themſelves, and held communion in the Ordinances of their God, and were not reckoned amongſt the Nations.

So in the *New-Teſtament*, when our Lord Jeſus ſent his Apoſtles to *Diſciple the Nations*, they in obedience to their Lord, went forth and Preached that Jeſus was the Chriſt and Saviour of the World, *Matt.* 28. 19. *Mark* 16. 20. And when perſons believed in the Lord their Redeemer, and repented of their ſins, they were *Baptized* into him in whom they believed, *Acts* 8. 12, and 38. And *Chap.* 16. 15, and

15, and 33. And being thus *gathered* into Chriſts fold, they were no more to *live to themſelves*, but to him that died for them, and roſe again, *Rom.* 14. Neither are they their *own*, for they are bought with a price, and being baptized into his death, muſt be *dead* to ſin, and walk in *newneſs* of life, *Rom.* 6. And the Lord having by his Meſſengers gathered his Children unto himſelf in a *Goſpel-Covenant*, gave them *Paſtors* and Teachers gifted by his own Spirit, to be their *Overſeers*, and feed them with the Word of God, that no fleſh might glory, but God might be glorified in all things, and that this flock of Chriſt being taught of God, might be built up in their moſt *Holy Faith*, and grow up a Holy Temple in the Lord, *Epheſ.* 2. 22. As it is written, *Be ye holy for I am holy*, 1 Pet. 1. 16. And that they may be ſo, they are commanded to add unto their Faith, *Vertue*, and to vertue *knowledg* and *temperance*, *patience*, *godlineſs*, *brotherly-kindneſs and charity*. That ſo an entrance might be adminiſtred into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord Jeſus, 2 *Pet.* 1. And thus they were to continue in the Apoſtles, *Doctrine and Fellowſhip in breaking Bread and Prayers*, Acts 2. 42. and to be as a *Vineyard* of the Lord, bringing forth fruit to his Glory, *Joh.* 15. 8. Being the Light of the world, the *Pillar* and ſtay of truth, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15.

And thus being ſanctified in Holineſs, they become a *Royal Prieſthood* to offer up ſpiritual *ſacrifice*, acceptable and well-pleaſing to God.

Theſe are the footſteps of the *Goſpel Church* in her morning-dreſs of primitive purity, and beauty; and her Lord hath ſaid, That he is as a man going a far journey, and hath appointed *every man his work*, and at his return will bleſs *that ſervant whom he ſhall find ſo doing*, Mark 13. 34. Matt. 24. 46.

If then that *good old way* is to be walked in until the Lord come, by all that expect to receive a bleſſing, and to behold his face with *joy* and not with terror, I ſhall preſent to every mans Conſcience theſe Two moſt important and neceſſary Queries: 1. Whether this courſe of Piety which I have here briefly ſet before you, be not that very way which the Primitive Church walked in? 2. Whether thoſe many who now a days call themſelves Chriſtians do ſo walk? or rather, whether their lives be not quite contrary, as if they were the Antipodes to the other? and though they retain the ſame *name*, one would think they had found out *ſome other Goſpel* to regulate their converſations by; ſpeak now *Conſcience*, and move them to reform and renew, and be *Chriſtians indeed*, and not in name only, leſt God ſpeak, and ſay, he *owns them not*, when it is too late

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to return. Can it poſſibly be imagined, That the Lord would give *Laws* and *Ordinances* with an heavenly authority, and confirm them with ſo many *miracles*, and call ſo many of his dear Servants to lay down their *lives* in defence of thoſe truths, and yet in after Generations would leave it to man to walk after the *devices* and deſires of their own hearts, and live like *Libertines*, as if barely *to know* that there is a God and a Chriſt, were ſufficient *Religion* for a Chriſtian now, which was ſo *ſtrict* and *holy* a profeſſion of old? Doth any Word of God ſay, that he hath ſet open a *wider* Gate to Life, than was then declared? or rather have not mens corrupt hearts imagined the way *broader* than Scripture limits, on purpoſe to flatter their *vile affections*, indulge themſelves in ſin, and ſilence an accuſing Conſcience, leſt they ſhould find remorſe? But how ingenious ſoever they may be to *cheat themſelves into damnation*, and whatſoever devices they have to betray their poor Souls to an eternal death, with fair pretences of Reaſon (like that Phyſitian who boaſted he had *killed* his patient with the *beſt method* in the world) yet we muſt know, that that very *Word* which is preſcribed to be our Rule of life here, is the ſame by which we muſt be judged hereafter; and then all men ſhall find, That Gods word, his ways, and precepts, and all Goſpel-Ordinances are

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the *ſame*; and that men muſt account for the breach thereof, or not being obedient thereunto; For, *Thoſe that walk in crooked ways, the Lord ſhall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity*, Pſal. 125. 5. And *He that heareth not that great Prophet in all things, ſhall be cut off*, Acts. 3 23.

Hence then,

Uſe 1. If the Creature be to work out his Salvation by the help of Grace, this ſhould put us upon the work of *Examination* whether we be imploy'd therein in good earneſt, or not; therefore let every ſoul ſeriouſly propound to it ſelf theſe neceſſary Queſtions.

1. What its ſtate is; Am I regenerate and *born again*, or in a natural ſtate? This, Sirs! is of abſolute neceſſity to be known; for, he that is not born again, *cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, John 3. 5.

2. What aſſurance have we of Gods love and our acceptance? Let us ſearch and examine whether Scripture-proof be for us; Do the *promiſes* run clear to our condition, ſtate, and courſe of life? There is Grace and Mercy, Pardon, and Heaven, Chriſt and Glory fully and moſt graciouſly *offer'd*; but to whom? 'Tis to thoſe that *repent* of their ſins and *forſake* them; 'tis to *Believers* and regenerated ones; 'tis to thoſe that *obey the Goſpel*, and follow the Lamb whither ſoever he goes; 'tis to

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those that *deny* all ungodliness and worldly lusts. Consider, oh! my Soul! art thou such an one? Art thou in this number? If not, *What are all these things to thee?*

3. What is it that we are most *in earnest* about, and most diligently and willingly imployed in, whether about *spiritual affairs* and heavenly performances, about Religion and soul-matters? and do our thoughts and actions tend that way? or are we not chiefly busied in the *hurry* of the world, and things here below? The Needle touch'd with the *loadstone*, looks always to the North-point; a Soul influenced by true *Grace*, makes Religion its *business*, has its Conversation in Heaven; those that are working out their Salvation, make it a more constant frame of life, than only to read, pray, or hear now and then a *fit*, and refrain from *gross scandalous* sins; they are weaned from the *allurements*, as well as from the *pollutions* of the world, which they use as though they used it not; for their *hearts are above* where their treasure is, and from whence they expect the recompence of reward.

4. Demand of thy Soul *whither thou art going*; say, To which Region of Eternity am I *posting* so fast; I am going, O my soul! somewhither in great haste; the swift Sun is as my Hour-glass, measuring out my short and fleeting minutes; I am *every evening* an irrecoverable days

journey onward, as a Poſt, as an Eagle, as a ſwift Ship my time runs, *Job* 9. 25. Am I ſure, O my ſoul, that my *Haven* will be in Happineſs, ſhall my next Port be with Chriſt? am I following his counſels, treading his ſteps, obeying his Laws? If not, then whither am I going in this journey of Mortality? will not my end be *deſtruction*? The period of my Voyage, *everlaſting Burnings:* O miſerable creature! conſider theſe things in time, whileſt there is *yet opportunity* to redeem time by walking with God.

Uſe 2. Furthermore, here is matter of Exhortation; Firſt to them that have *no deſire*, nor uſe any endeavours to work out their Salvation, but deem it *needleſs*, and a thing of the leaſt concernment. Let all ſuch conſider, that to *be ſowing to the fleſh is death*; that within a little while, this week, or *this day*, for ought they know, they will be in *everlaſting torments*; and how many *Worlds*, if they had them, would they then give for *one day of grace*, for one moment of opportunity to work out their Salvation from that bottomleſs-pit of miſery. Conſider this, O man! whileſt yet thou haſt this happy ſeaſon; make uſe of the *day*, for the *night cometh wherein no man can work*: Shall the Lord that made thee, and ſent his Son to redeem thee, and would have thee ſaved, receive ſuch a *Denial* as this, *Jer.* 44. 16. That

thou

thou *wilt not be ſaved*, except on thine own ſinful terms? it may be in words thou wilt not ſay, that thou wilt not love nor ſerve God; but thy *life* amounts to ſo much, thy *diſobedience* ſpeaks it, thy *contempt* of the Goſpel ſpeaks it, thy *carnal Converſation* which is without God in the world ſaith as much; What wilt thou anſwer, if the Lord tell thee that he gave thee a Being where his *Word* was; Caſt thy lot in a *Land of Bibles*, and thou hadſt *reaſon*, and underſtanding, given thee to have made uſe of them, as a *word of eternal life*; but thou didſt caſt this holy *precious word* behind thy back, and didſt ſerve his and thine own moſt mortal *Enemy*, lovedſt thy luſts, the *pleaſures*, the world, more than him; what canſt thou plead, or what excuſe wilt thou make for thy ſelf in the dreadful day of account? or what canſt thou that ſo neglecteſt or contemneſt Religion, now expect, but then to hear that ſoul-amazing word, *Depart from me thou worker of iniquity*, Mat. 25. notwithſtanding thou didſt flatter thy ſoul that thou hadſt a *multitude with thee*, and didſt condemn the innocent, and refuſe to hearken to the Counſel of God.

On the other ſide, here is matter of *Exhortation* to ſuch as have put on Chriſt by viſible profeſſion. Know ye, dear Friends! that you are likewiſe to be exhorted, as *Paul* doth here the *Philippians*, to *work out your ſalvation*;

which is the end of your faith, the fulneſs of your joy; *Be ye holy in all manner of converſation*, walk circumſpectly in your life; if you have put on Chriſt, you muſt be *dead to ſin*; you muſt not *ſpeak* as others, nor *live* as others, for your lives muſt be *harmleſs, pure and innocent*; your words *ſavoury*, ſeaſoned as with *ſalt*, and adminiſtring *Grace to the hearers*; your affections muſt be *above*, your delight in Gods Law; your love muſt be to God, to Chriſt, to Chriſtians, yea to all the Children of men; your warfare muſt *be ſpiritual*, reſiſting, overcoming and putting to flight all the powers of *darkneſs*; making ſtrait ſteps to your feet, that you be not turned out of the way of *Truth* and *Holineſs*, to the right hand, or to the left; you are in Gods *Vineyard*, therefore you muſt work diligently; your Lords *Eye* is always upon you; you are *playing a prize* of Glory, wreſtling for an *Immortal Crown*; you are obſerved both by *Angels* and *Men*, and a *Book of Remembrance* is written, and all will be brought to *tryal* ere long; therefore keep up your *reſolutions*, flag not in *duty*, regard not the vain ſeducements of a *periſhing world*, but let *every day* be ſo paſſed in Chriſtian performances, as if it were to be the *laſt day*; ſo, when the laſt day ſhall come, it will be a day of *comfort*, and not of *terror*.

For

For your Encouragement:

Motive 1. Consider, your work is not the *hardest*, in respect of the sufferings that Gods Servants have been brought to; the Writing to the *Hebrews*, shews us how those *Worthies* of old *wandred in sheep-skins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted and tormented*; and since that time, how many *cruelties* hath the malice of men invented to *torture* the dear Servants of God, the Histories of all Ages declare: and yet the Lord hath caused his people of this Generation to have such *light afflictions*, as few Ages wherein there were so many that did imbrace Truth, can parallel; and if the Lord provoked by our *unfruitfulness* and *unthankfulness*, should bring his people to *deeper sufferings*, he would but put them amongst that blessed number, *Rev.* 7. 14. that came out of *great tribulation, and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and whom the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne will feed, and lead them to fountains of waters; and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes.*

Mot. 2. Consider, that *delays* in this great work are unspeakably *dangerous*; for if the time allotted to each man and woman be not laid hold on, and improved, then this Salvation-work cannot be done for ever; if *once* the

day of Grace be gone, that the righteous Lord ſay, Let not that ſoul have any more ſaving-grace offered it; but, *that that dieth, let it dye*, Zachar. 11 9. or ſentence it to be *cut down* as cumbering the ground, *Luke* 13. 9. How ſad and *deplorable* will be the condition of that ſoul? and how knoweth the *youngeſt* or *ſtrongeſt*, how ſoon death may have its commiſſion to go to that man or woman, and ſummon them to *judgment*, and the Lord write a *Mene Tekel* upon their Lives, as on *Belſhazzars*, Dan. 5.26. even in the midſt of their *feaſts* and *revellings*? for as *Job* ſaith, When *they leaſt think it, then death like a tempeſt ſtealeth them away*, Job. 27.20. 'Tis a *fatal preſumption* to put off ſo important a work to *another day*; how knoweſt thou that God will *afford* thee another day? and do not many procraſtinate and put off ſo one day after another, till at laſt their laſt day comes and *ſurprizes* them before they have done any thing effectually in order to their Salvation? Therefore the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, *To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart*, for though *true repentance is never too late, yet late repentance is ſeldom true*. 'Twere a wretched perverſneſs if any ſhould think it too long to be in Gods ſervice, if they ſhould begin betimes, and live to old Age. The Reverend *Polycarpus* that lived in the Primitive Age, and is ſaid to have been an Hearer of St. *John*, was far from ſuch a thought;

a thought; when being by threats and intreaties tempted to deny Christ: He answered, *Eighty and six years have I served him, and wanted nothing, and therefore God forbid that I should now forsake him.* Alas! Soul, canst thou not afford the Lord *fifty* or *sixty* years service in such *imperfect* manner as the best of men are able to perform it in, and the Lord hath afforded thee Glory, Honour and Joy for ever and ever? It is an undervaluing of those rich Gospel-promises, for which the Piety, nay the continued *Martyrdom* of Ten thousand Ages were not a *proportionable* exchange; therefore *begin to live betimes*, for a man in a natural state is rather to be lookt upon *dying* than living; they only may be said to live, that live to God; so that many old people may have it written upon their Tombs, *These never lived indeed:* As it was on the Tomb of *Similis*, *Here he lies that was seventy years, but lived but seven.*

Mot. 3. Consider what it is, that is to be worked out, even *SALVATION*; Men you know in their labours have respect unto the thing labour'd for; which if it be advantageous and great, they are then incouraged, notwithstanding the work prove hard, tedious or difficult to go on, because when their end is once obtained, it will make them rich. Well, Sirs! here are *everlasting riches* for you, *Prov.* 8. 18.

All is yours, if you be Christs, 1 Cor. 3. 22. The Consideration of which wonderful love of God, in providing the riches of glory, the Kingdom prepared from the foundation of the World, and declared now in Gospel-times more plainly than under the Law, *Ephes.* 3. 5. This, I say, doth so much the more require and *engage* the creature to *love the Lord*, who hath so loved lost man; And who would not receive this so great Salvation upon Gods own terms, which are Covenant-terms? 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. If men could have it upon their *own terms*, many would accept of it; but when they hear that they must *deny themselves*, and take up their *Cross* and follow Christ, as *Mat.* 16. 24. then they are *sad*, like the young man, *Mat.* 19. 22. Being not willing to leave their *sins* and worldly enjoyments, and an *easie customary Notion* of Religion, for the life and power of it, in *Mortification*, Charity and Holiness; they would *Reign* with Christ, but would not *suffer* with him; willing many are to have this precious Salvation, if the way to obtain it were a *wide and broad* way; but if there must be so much *strictness* and Mortification, so much spirituality and holiness of life; then they confer with *flesh and blood*, and carnal men, and resolve to *venture* without a Scripture-warrant for eternal life, upon a *supposition* that God may have *mercy* upon them without a promise,

nay

nay *against his own word*, which witnesseth, That *without Holiness none shall see God*; and then least Conscience should *awake* and tell them, that their supposition will deceive them, they endeavour to keep it *quiet* by self-flatteries, and little *outside performances*; a little zeal, a little grace serves their turn, which indeed is *none at all*; their Conversation is *loose*, and they will muster up *excuses* for *sins*, and plead for neglect of Duty, as if a luke-warm state were best; or quite cold, well enough; and so *withering* and hardening by degrees, they become always *Practical*, and oft-times *Dogmatical Atheists*, and with *Davids* Fool say in their *hearts* at least, if not with their lips, *That there is no God*. But tell me seriously, Beloved! did you ever hear a dying man complain, that he had been *too diligent* about his Salvation, that he had spent more time than *needed* in the Lords service, that he had been *too pure*, too holy, or had got too much grace and assurance of Gods love? Certainly no Ear could ever *witness* such a complaint; but every days woful experience, makes us hear many that have *howled on their beds*, as the Prophet speaks, *Hos.* 7. 14. for *want of Holiness*, faith and assurance of the love of God. O then, how they bewail their *neglect* of opportunities! how they contemn all that they so *greedily*

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purſued before, finding it now to be of no *value* in that hour of diſtreſs! Then all they had, would they have given for a ſealed Evidence for Heaven! Then *Crowns* and *Kingdoms* would be parted with, for a certain hope of Salvation! Therefore, *Seek the Lord whileſt he may be found, call upon him whileſt he is near*, Iſa. 55. 6.

SERMON

SERMON III.

Matt. VII. 21.

Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.

THE Words are part of the beſt *Sermon* that ever was Preached in the World, *viz. That* delivered by our bleſſed Saviour in the *Mount*; He *who ſpake as never man ſpake*, and *taught as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.* In this Sermon the Lord ſpeaks many gracious words to plant and cheriſh *Faith, Chap.* 6. 25. And alſo to inſtruct them to a *good Converſation, Chap.* 5. 13, 14, 15, 16. And to direct them in their *worſhip, Chap.* 6. 5, *to* 13. He doth likewiſe inform them of *future judgment*, at the end of this *7th Chap.* from this 21. *v.* That men might *know* Gods *Will*, and *do it*, and not periſh, but be like a man that prudently *built his*

his houſe upon a rock, which when the winds blew, and the floods came, fell not.

The obſervation I ſhall make at preſent from the Text, is this:

Doct. *That many will miſs of Eternal Life in the day of Tryal, that did expect it.*

This ſeems to be intended by thoſe words in Luke 13. 24, *Many will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.* So in *Matt.* 25. 11, We read that thoſe called *fooliſh Virgins come* and call with ſome ſeeming confidence, and yet they are denied; and this further appears, in that we are told of many that have an *expectation*, and yet both it and they muſt *periſh*, *Prov.* 11. 28. *Job* 8. 13. Now this *expectation* or deceitful hope is grounded upon *ignorance*, when Souls miſtake about the *condition* of the Promiſes, whilſt the natural man doth not *diſcern the things of God*, 2 Cor. 3. There is a *Vail* ſpread over all Nations, even *natural darkneſs*, which the Lord will take off in that day, *Iſa.* 25. 7. So that men in a natural condition are ignorant of the way of life, until the true *light* prevails, which doth in a meaſure lighten the Soul, 1 *John* 2. 8. 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. Which being made *light* through the *word*, doth then diſcern the path of Salvation, and hath a ſight by *Faith* of heavenly things, and getteth a lively *hope*, and having this hope, *purifieth himſelf as he is pure*, 1 Joh. 3. 3. Which

hope

hope is an *Anchor* of the Soul, and brings him to enter within the *Vail*, Heb. 6. 19.

The more particular *Cauſes* of mens being miſtaken in ſo great and weighty a matter as their own ſtate to all eternity, are.

Reaſ. 1. When men live where Gods Word is in their own Tongue, and yet remain in their natural *ignorance*, it is, becauſe they do not ſo *love light* as to come unto it, *John* 3. 20. The Lord having given it to be as a *lamp* to guide us to life; if men will not receive it in truth and a perfect heart, they remain without the true ſaving light, as the Lord declares, *Iſa.* 8. 20. Did men acquaint themſelves with Gods will revealed in his Word, they would know upon what *conditions* the Lord had made promiſe of accepting his creature, and not ſo miſtake about their own intereſt therein, but diſcern how their ſtate were; and finding it *dangerous* and deplorable, would ſeek more diligently to ſecure their Souls, and work out their Salvation according to the Goſpel-offers, and Gods own moſt *free* and gracious, yet ſtill *Covenant-preſcriptions.*

Reaſ. 2. Is becauſe men are many times *content in a natural ſtate*, purpoſing to be as they are; Let Scripture ſpeak never ſo plain to them, yea ſo directly and expreſly as if it ſpake to them by name, and told them they were the very

very perſons that deceived themſelves by a *forced and fained hope*; yet will they not believe but *all is well* with them, they will *live* as they have done, and *die* as they live, making it the leaſt of all their care to do the Will of God, and the leaſt of their *fear* to miſs of Life Eternal,

Reaſ. 3. The *Example of the multitude* that paſs the broad way, cauſeth Souls to think an evil caſe to be ſafe, becauſe there are ſo many with them: And therefore if they are warned of the danger, they will ſay, they *live as well as their neighbours*; that multitudes go with them; they ſhall ſpeed as well as the reſt; and they hope God will not give denial to ſo *many*, and ſuch *great* ones, and *mighty ones*; not conſidering that God has expreſly forewarn'd them of this very matter—*Thou ſhalt not follow a multitude to do evil:* and hath declared to them, that *wide is the Gate that leadeth to deſtruction, and many go in thereat:* And that even after he was aſcended, our Lord hath purpoſely ſent from Heaven to acquaint them, That when he ſhall come again, the *great men, and the rich men, and the mighty men ſhall hide themſelves, and call on the rocks to fall on them, and cover them from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,* Rev. 6. 15. Hear, O Soul! and conſider what ſmall comfort thy multitude will be to

thee

thee in that day, and thy *great* and mighty ones whom thou didſt follow; Thy company being great and *numerous* will make that Fire no *cooler*, than adding a great ſtack of *Fewel* makes common fire weaker, but on the contrary will be an aggravation of your Torments.

Reaſ. 4. *Dependance on the name only of Chriſtianity* makes perſons miſtake their condition, when ſomething is done that is counted Religion; as ſome think it much conduces towards their Salvation to be *born* in a Country that acknowledges Chriſt, and *owns the Scriptures*; and indeed, this is a rich and precious *priviledg*, if it be improved; but if men have no more to plead, than that they knew there was a God and a Saviour, and that the Scripture was *Gods Word*, this will be very inſufficient; for here are ſome, yea, many that have much more to alledge, and ſhall ſay, that they have *propheſied in Chriſts name, and in his name have done many wonderful works*; and yet even they may not enter in; *He never knew them, v.* 22. And the word of Truth ſaith, That he that *ſaith he knoweth God, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar*, 1 Joh. 2. 4. *Iſrael* of old were apt to ſpeak *peace* to themſelves upon this account, yet it ſtood them in no ſtead, ſo as to ſecure them in a carnal ſinful ſtate, *Jer.* 7. 10. *Rom.* 11. 21. Nay rather it will be an

aggra-

aggravation of their ſin and puniſhment; He that *knoweth his Maſters will and doth it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.* And we ſee the Lord pronounceth the heavieſt woes to thoſe places where his Word was Preached, and they had means to know God, but did not hearken thereunto and *obey* it. It *ſhall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that City,* Luke 10. 13. Be aſſured therefore, that nothing leſs will be accepted in that day, than *perſonal repentance* and regeneration, a new heart and a *new life*; For if any man *be in Chriſt, he is a new creature,* 2 Cor. 5. 17.

Moreover, All ſuch as truſt in ſome *outward* Goſpel-performances, as being congregated with the Lords people, and walking in ſome *viſible* Ordinances, but neglect to be in a lively *quikned frame,* as becometh Chriſtians indeed in the *power* of Grace and all ſingleneſs of heart; Theſe alſo miſtake their condition, their building is not *firm* enough on the Rock; for they muſt learn to be *fervent in ſpirit ſerving the Lord,* that they may have *Oyl* as well as *Lamps* when they ſhould meet the Bridegroom; they muſt put on the *whole Armour of God,* like good Soldiers of Chriſt exerciſed in *every Grace,* whereby they may be able to withſtand temptation, and remain alive unto God, and not have a *name to live, and be dead.* For when men only *conceit that they live*, they go on with-

without fear, and apply promiſes, and queſtion no danger, being ſecure in their own minds; but if they be truly dead all this while, they have an *evil quiet Conſcience*, which many times proves more *dangerous* than a diſturbed condemning one; for that is ſenſible, and as in a Glaſs repreſents to a man his miſerable and undone condition, and ſo ſometimes drives him to ſeek for remedy.

Conſider therefore, O man! or woman! that *readeſt* this, how ſad and dreadful it will be with *thee* if thou ſhouldeſt prove a *dead creature*, That when thou haſt had thy fellowſhip amongſt the godly, and enjoyed Goſpel-means and Ordinances, and haſt rejoyced to hear promiſes declared, ſuppoſing thy ſelf to have an intereſt therein, and didſt imagine thou ſhouldſt *dye the death of the righteous*, and be a companion with them in glory, as thou waſt in the viſible Church; and yet at laſt when thy fatal time comes, to be ſeparated from them for ever as a dead branch fit only to be *cut off and burned* in everlaſting flames; O! with what woful and *mournful* lamentations will a Soul part, in that day (which expected no ſuch thing) with *Chriſt*, with *Angels*, and *Saints*, never to enjoy their Society more! yet hath Chriſt dealt ſo lovingly with them, as to give them fair warning, That *thoſe that have a name to live and are dead, he will come to them as*

a Theif, Rev. 3. 3. And *thoſe that live and keep their garments, ſhall walk with him in white, but the lukewarm he will ſpue out of his mouth*, Rev. 3. 16.

Uſe 1. Is it ſo, That ſome will *miſs of life* that ſeem'd to expect it? then labour to get a *perſonal evidence to life* eternal, that you may be like *Paul*, who ſaid, that he ſo ran, not as uncertainly; and ſo fought, not as one *that beateth the Air*, 1 Cor. 9. 26. He that beateth the Air leaves no *impreſſion* with his ſtroke; ſo he that in the work of *mortification* and ſanctification leaves no impreſſion on the heart, his labour is *loſt*, his life, his words and heart are the ſame, only a cuſtomary road of Religious exerciſes is traced over, but without any *influence on the ſoul*; Therefore with the Apoſtle, let all that would have an evidence for Heaven, experience that their endeavours in Religion have effectually been exerciſed upon their *hearts* and *lives* in a ſenſible operation; then may they more cheerfully conclude their days with the ſame Apoſtles triumphant aſſurance; *I have fought the good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs*, 2 Tim. 4. 7. When a Soul can ſay ſo indeed and in truth upon Scripture-grounds, and the teſtimony of a good and ſincere conſcience, then may it comfortably ſay with *Simeon*, *Lord*,

now

now letteſt thou thy ſervant to depart in peace, according to thy word.

Uſe 2. Hence we learn for our *comfort*, That the ſame Lord that died and roſe again, is to be Judge of quick and dead; and is not this matter of unſpeakable conſolation to all the Lords people, that he that ſo loved them as to lay down his *life* for them, is to be their Judge? *Acts* 17. 21. *John* 5. 22. 2 *Tim.* 4. 1. Even he in whom they *believed*, whom they followed, and for whoſe ſake they have ſuffered; O this refreſheth Chriſtians when they conſider, that their Judge is their *Friend*, and their Advocate, their *Redeemer*, that hath purchaſed them to himſelf. But on the other ſide, this may ſpeak *terror* to all them that will not have the Lord to reign over them; for ſuch when they come before him, are declared his *enemies, and muſt be ſlain*, Luke 19. 27. O all you, whoever you be, *rich* or *poor*, *high* or *low*, that are *Rebels to Chriſt* (and whoever is not with him, is *againſt* him) take notice, that the ſame Jeſus that was crucified, is made both *Lord and Chriſt*, even he who was your ſcorn and reproach; he, even he that you oppoſe; unto whoſe ſpiritual Government you will not ſubmit, but will take part with his great enemy the *Devil* in the ways of ſin; you muſt know, that notwithſtanding all affronts, and ſuch your ſtouting of it out in defiance to the

Lords anointed, yet he will ſet him *on his holy hill of Sion*, Pſal. 2. 6. And he ſhall be your Judge, at whoſe glorious preſence your hearts will tremble, and be ſo diſmayed, That *Rocks* and *Mountains* to bruiſe you to pieces, will be choſen then, rather than a Chriſt to judge you, if it could be obtained; Therefore take that counſel in *Pſal.* 2. 10, 11, 12. *Kiſs the ſon leſt he be angry, and ye periſh, &c.*

From the term or expreſſion here uſed *They ſhall ſay, Lord! Lord!* We may obſerve:

Doctrine 2. *That when the vail of Ignorance ſhall be taken away, ſinners ſhall know, that they ſtood in need of a Saviour.*

This appears by their *pleading*, Matt. 25. 44. And by their *mourning*, Matt. 24. 30. And by that *terror* which takes hold upon them, *Iſa.* 2. 19. and *Rev.* 6. 15. Then there muſt of neceſſity be known the want of a Saviour, when there is a full *diſcovery* of their miſerable condition, and a *ſenſe* of wrath to come. For then they will know,

1. That *their Souls are unſanctified*; Chriſt was not in them, therefore they are *Reprobates*, 2 Cor. 13. 5. Their Bodies were not the *Temples of the Holy Ghoſt*, 1 Cor. 6. 19. Sin reigned and ruled in them, and for want of coming

coming to Christ, they died in them, and rose from the dead with them, all *polluted* and defiled with the filth of their abominations, *John* 8. 24.

2. Their sins being thus upon them, they remain *unpardoned*; then will they see the need they have of the *pardoning merits* of a Saviours sacrifice, when they shall stand at the Judgment-seat charged with all their iniquities, a large and dismal Bill of *Indictment* uncancell'd to plead to, of so many Thousand *Oaths*, so much *oppression*, so much *prophaneness*, so many years *neglect of Grace*; for being unpenitent, unbelieving, and living without God in the world; yea more sins of *Omission* and *Commission* than man can relate, will then stand chargeable upon them, *Psal.* 50. 1. *John* 3. 36. And therefore having no right to Christs *Blood* to be applied to them for pardon, in the next place,

3. Their *persons stand unjustified*, they cannot stand in the congregation of the upright, *Psal.* 1. 5. *Psal.* 69. 27. But must fall in judgement. And then, being not justified,

4. Their Bodies are *not glorified*, Rom. 8. 30. Therefore the Lord shall *despise their Image*, Psal. 63 20. For 'tis said, some shall *Rise to shame and contempt*, Dan. 12 2. *Indignation and wrath to every soul that doth evil, both Jew and Gentile:* and this wrath of God abideth on them that shall be punished with

everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, *and from the glory of his power*, Rom. 2. 8. John 3 36. 2 Thes. 1 9. Poor creatures will then (when 'tis *too late* for their safety) see how miserable a thing it is to *dye* without an interest in Christ, when all their *pleasures* are gone, their *honours* left behind in the dust, their estates and *riches* parted with, and all earthly enjoyments vanished away like a *Dream*; Then Christ will be of more value than Ten thousand worlds. Now men too generally look upon earthly things; their gain, their pleasures, are minded more than the riches of Grace and Glory: And if they do but make a formal profession of Religion, go to *Church* as they call it, and walk but without *notorious scandal* in their dealings and conversation, they fancy all is well enough: But at that time they shall sadly find, all the little *outside* performances and *formal* superstitions wherewith they silenced their Consciences, and deceived both their *Neighbours* and their own Souls, will stand them in no stead. For then will they have nothing to say, why *sentence* of eternal death should not pass upon them, no *Pardon* to plead, no *Advocate* to intercede, no *Mediator* to attone Divine Justice for them, which makes them not dare to look up, or behold the face of the All glorious *Judge*; but all terrified and dismayed, would *fly* from his presence

(which yet they cannot fly) and call in vain for Rocks and Mountains to fall upon and hide them. How dreadful will the Lord Christ then, seated in his Throne of *judgement* and *soveraignty*, appear to those of whom he shall say, As *for those my enemies that would not that I should reign over them*, let them perish for their Rebellion, and be cast into *Flames* unquencheable, where there is perpetual *weeping*, and everlasting *Gnashing of Teeth!*

Use 1. This being so, 'tis strange and sad to consider how many people in their daily *prayers* repeat by *Rote* that excellent Petition wherein our Lord taught his Disciples to pray for the *Hastening* and Advancement of his glorious *Dominion*; and yet it appears they never have any real desires of any such thing, nor is it their interest; for considering their state and condition, they do but request the hastening of their own *destruction* and torments, for it would be to them a day of *terror*, and not of *joy*; and though they use the words out of custom, yet they make no *preparations* for it in their lives, yea their thoughts are far from it; for tell them of *Christ* and his *Kingdom*, and you will be but tedious and *burthensome* to them, and they will presently be weary, and divert, if they can, the discourse to worldly matters, *trivial* at least, if not *wicked* and profane. But is it not Ten thousand pities, that

men that have a Saviour given them, and *Salvation* offered, a Kingdom prepared for them, ſhould yet not have hearts to embrace it, but exchange and loſe all, for a *cheat* of Satan and Sin, and yet daily pray—*Thy Kingdom come?* How dareſt thou, O Soul! ſo to pray, who haſt no *Right* in that Kingdom, but rather doſt dread the very thoughts of it? If the great Judgment-day were come, would it rejoyce thee? art thou *prepared* for the great Account? If not, then learn to take heed that thou doſt not pray againſt thy own deſires, but firſt and above all things *ſecure an intereſt* in the Kingdom to thy Soul, and then pray that it may be haſtened. The ineſtimable benefit of Chriſts Sacrifice will appear as well by the *miſery* of thoſe that have no part therein for the remiſſion of their ſins, who have not by *Faith* applyed it to themſelves, nor became *obedient* followers of the Lord, as by the unſpeakable *happineſs* of thoſe who ſhall be ſaved thereby, who then will rejoyce in that ſaying, *Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will ſave us*, Iſa. 25. 9.

Uſe 2. This doth inform Souls, that it is extreamly needful to get a ſerious and deep *ſenſe of the want of* a *Chriſt* to be perſonally their Saviour: Becauſe every man is ſold under ſin, there is none *righteous*, no not one. And there is *no other name* given under Heaven

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whereby we muſt be ſaved, *Acts* 4. 12. And the rather ſhould they be ſerious herein, becauſe the want proceeds from their own *negligence*; for this great benefit of obtaining Chriſt to be to us a Saviour, is *freely offered*, Iſa. 51. 1. and 49. 6. Acts 13. 47. As himſelf ſaith, *Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voyce, and open the door, I will come in, and ſup with him*, Rev. 3. 20. How canſt thou but ſee a neceſſity of getting to thy Soul a precious Chriſt, ſince 'tis he that will, and *alone* can, bring all that thou wanteſt with him? Doſt thou want *Grace*? Why *Grace and Truth comes by Jeſus Chriſt*. Doſt thou want *Soul-peace* and *reſt*? Chriſt aſſures you, come to him and *you ſhall find reſt to your ſouls*, Matt. 11. Do you want your *ſins pardoned*? Remiſſion of ſins is Preached in his *Name*. Do we want an *Interceder* in Heaven? Chriſt is an *Advocate at the Right hand of God*. Do we want things *preſent* or things to *come*? If Chriſt be ours, *all is ours*, 1 Cor. 3. 22.

Uſe 3. Seeing it will be ſo, That whoſoever is not ſet at Chriſts right hand, will be without ground of hope; for thoſe at his right hand only are *Sheep*, Matt. 25. 33. O then get into the *Fold of Chriſt*, whatever it coſt you; He will feed you and lead you by *ſtill waters*: Yea, though he bring you through the *valley of the ſhadow of death*, ſcorn, contempt, affliction,

fliction, perſecution and many tribulations, yet ſtill his *Rod* and his *Staff ſhall comfort you*, Pſal. 23. 3. and all ſhall work together for your good. Canſt thou, O Soul! have a better *Guide*, better *Company*, or a better *Inheritance*? But if thou wilt ſlight all theſe, and walk with ſinners under the conduct of Satan, and wicked men, and thy own *luſts*, then where Satan and wicked men ſhall be, there muſt thou be alſo; the Lord will not part ſuch Society, but put them together, who chuſe ſuch, rather than Chriſt and his Sheep. Therefore *open* to him, O Soul! whilſt he calls by his *Word* and *Grace*, before thou harden under the means; draw back the *Bolt* and *Bars* of ſecurity and wilfulneſs, ſelf-conceitedneſs, or whatever elſe ſtands in the way, and keeps Chriſt and thy Soul at a diſtance: For if thou haſt no Communion and acquaintance with him *here*, he will not know thee *hereafter*. If thou wilt live a ſtranger to him, and ſo *dye*, then thou wilt certainly riſe a ſtranger to him, and he will not know thee for ever.

Uſe 4. This ſhould quicken all thoſe that are under the promiſe of ſecurity; At that day ſhall the Congregation of the Righteous *ſtand in judgment*; They ſhall have no cauſe to fear or be diſmaid: How ſhould this ſtir up our Souls to follow after Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, without which no man can ſee God [with comfort]

comfor] *Heb.* 6. Be not weary, nor *faint*, for in due time you ſhall reap. Will living by Faith in Chriſt, bring a Soul to live with Chriſt? Then 'tis a *bleſſed life*, let men ſay what they will of it: It brings riches of *Grace* in this life, and *Glory* eternal in that which is to come.

Uſe 5. Let us therefore *magnifie God* for his wonderful love, and rich mercy in giving us a Saviour: How ſhould our mouths be filled with *praiſes*, and our ſouls breathe forth *Hallelujahs* continually to the Lord Almighty, through Jeſus Chriſt, as *Rev.* 5. 13. That bleſſed number of the Spirits of juſt men made perfect are ſaid to *ſing* perpetual praiſes to him that ſitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb, and this upon the conſideration of their *Redemption*, verſ. 9.

Uſe 6. This is matter of further *comfort* to all *Nathaniels*, true *Iſraelites* indeed, Chriſt will *own them* before Angels and men, and even before all their enemies. Thoſe cruel upbraiding enemies that perſecuted and ſcorned thee, ſhall ſee thee owned and promoted to Glory, *Luke* 16. 32. Let this comfort every gracious Soul under *ſufferings*, it will not be long, but the Righteous Judge will ſit, when all the Judges of the Earth muſt ſurrender their *Commiſſions*, and break up their *Terms*, and the Lord will take his place himſelf, and free the

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oppreſſed. Therefore ſeek not *revenge*, murmur not at *wrongs*, ſuffer patiently, be not troubled when thou meeteſt with *oppreſſion* and unjuſt dealings from either Friends or Enemies, all things will ſhortly be ſet right, all ſhall be brought to an impartial Bar, and your ſuffering meekly, will in that day render you no cauſe of ſorrow: The Lord who is infinitely *wiſe*, knows how to deal with every creature, and in every caſe in perfect righteouſneſs. Whilſt we are here, we have ſo much *corruption*, and *ignorance*, and *ſelf-intereſt*, that we cannot rightly determine caſes, nor avenge wrongs without committing *greater*: Therefore judge nothing before the time. Too many there are, that are ſo ready to judge, and eager of *cenſuring* of all that cannot ſee and ſay juſt as they do, that every little *difference* muſt fling them under feet, and repreſent them as Heathens and Infidels: But we have not ſo learned of Chriſt, nor have any ſuch pattern from our *Ancient Brethren*, who became *All to All that they might ſave ſome*. Therefore, Let all that fear God take heed how they condemn the Generation of the juſt; All men are in a poſſibility *to fail*; and if thou, O *cenſorious ſpirit*, maiſt as well as another, though thou over-prizeſt thy own knowledg, and thinkeſt it muſt ſit in the *ſtern*, and command all others to bow before it; yet if this thy knowledg be but

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mixt with ſo much ignorance as generally attends on mortals, Why may not *another* be uſeful to communicate ſome of his knowledg in the place of thy remains of ignorance, as well as thou to him? Therefore be not raſh in judgement; poſſibly thou thinkeſt only that thou *ſtrikeſt an Heretick or a Schiſmatick*, But what if Chriſt ſhould find a *Saint bleeding* by thy inconſiderate hands? And as for all thoſe that are *cenſured* or reproached for the teſtimony of a good Conſcience, let them take comfort in this, That there is a day coming to *redreſs* all their grievances, and to clear their innocence, wherein *Juſtice* and *Truth* ſhall be eſtabliſhed, and no more oppreſſion heard of for ever; when all Gods people ſhall be of one mind, no *ſelfiſhneſs* nor *pride*, nor *envy* left to create *diviſions*, but being delivered from the bondage of corruption, and reſtored into the *Glorious liberty of the Sons of God*, ſhall praiſe our God with *united* hearts, and without wearineſs for ever and ever.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

Isa. LXV. 8.

Thus saith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants sake, that I may not destroy them all.

THE Lord by the Prophet declares *Comforts* to his Servants to bear up their hearts in a time of *distress and calamity*, which was foretold to be impending on that people *Israel* for their *iniquity*, as we read in this Chapter, the 2, 7, 12, 14, and 26 *verses*; notwithstanding which, the Lord shews that he would save *a remnant* of them, and that he would have mercy on a people that were lookt upon as without *hope*, that the Propheſies might be fulfilled, *Deut.* 32. 21. and *Amos* 9. 11.

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The *Cauſe* of their threatned judgment, is declared to be the *ſins of Iſrael*, even the neglect of the *ſervice of God*, and the breaking of his righteous *Laws*: For the time of delivering this Propheſie, was when *Religion was decayed* in reſpect of that ſincere obedience which was commanded, *Chap.* 59. 14, 15. For though the Word of God, which is a *Rule* for Religion, be *ſtedfaſt and ſetled*, Pſal. 119. 89. yet the Children of men have been ſo heedleſs of their obedience and ſteady conformity thereunto, that the ſame hath not at all times been a-like embraced, but met with *ebbs* and *decays* of publick acknowledgment and obſervation; which yields us this concluſion,

Doctrine 1. That *true Religion doth not always keep in one flouriſhing ſtate, but is hindered with decays both in the number of thoſe that profeſs it, and the zeal of their profeſſion.*

That Religion hath not been a-like flouriſhing in all ages of the world, is ſo well known, that I need not ſpeak much to the *proof* of it; The complaints of Gods people at ſeveral times may demonſtrate it, *Pſal.* 74. 9. *Mich.* 7. 1. *Jer.* 26. *Rev.* 2. 4. and 3. 18. Moreover the Scriptures are full of *inſtances* to this purpoſe, *Gen.* 4. 26. It is ſaid, That men did *begin to call upon the Lord*, which ſhews that the faithful did gather or *congregate* to ſerve the Lord: But *Chap.* 6. 12. we read that all

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fleſh (ſave one Family) had ſo corrupted their ways that the Lord reſolv'd to take them off by a great judgment. Here was ſo lamentable a decay, that the Church of God did conſiſt of but very few perſons. So we find, *Exod.* 15. how *Iſrael* ſung praiſes, and *believed in the Lord*, and *Moſes*; But on a ſudden (for we are told of it in the very next Chapter) there is ſuch an eclipſe of their faith and humble waiting upon God, that they murmured and ſaid, they were brought into the Wilderneſs *to be all killed*. And in *Chap.* 32. 3. They make them *gods of gold*. In 2 *Chron.* 30. 12. The hand of God was with his people to give them *one heart* to do according to his Word: They deſtroyed *Idolatry*, and ſet up Gods true publick Worſhip. But in *Chap.* 33. 9. We hear that all this zeal was *chill'd and frozen up*; inſomuch that *Judah* and *Jeruſalem* did worſe than the Heathen. So alſo in *Chap.* 35. 18. compared with *Chap.* 36. 16. Nor is the Apoſtle *Paul* ſilent in this matter, but complains of the declenſion of Faith and Piety amongſt the Chriſtians of *Aſia*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 15. And whoſoever ſhall but look into the Hiſtories of all Ages, ſhall find that Religion ſeldom ſtood long in *one and the ſame* flouriſhing ſtate, but had its *ebbs* and decays.

Therefore that we may the better be without the *guilt* of having any hand in ſuch impairing

pairing of the ſtate of Religion: It will be neceſſary to conſider ſome *Cauſes* that occaſion its declenſion.

Cauſe 1. *Contention* amongſt them that profeſs Religion hath been a deſtroying Evil; for *Where envying and ſtrife is, there is confuſion and every evil work*, James 3. 16. And if ye *bite and devour one another, take heed leſt you be deſtroyed one of another*, Gal. 5. 15. When the Goſpel Congregations walked in that lovely path of ſpiritual amity, holding the *unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace*, how did they grow up a building of God, and *Sion* enlarged her Tents! *Acts* 9. 31. Then all men might know that they were Chriſts Diſciples by their *love one to another*, John 13. 35. But when *Contention* ſprung from that curſed root, *Pride*, *Prov.* 13. 10. and got footing amongſt Chriſtians, O! what havock and *devaſtations* it made! *Paul* ſeeing the beginnings of this at *Corinth*, tells them that they were *carnal, and walked as men*, 1 Cor. 3. 3. And after the death of thoſe *Heaven-inſpired Guides*, what animoſities, ſtrivings for ſuperiority, *hot diſputes* about trifles, as the time of keeping *Eaſter*, *&c.* mutual *Brawlings*, and every man condemning and hating, nay oftentimes worrying and *ſlaying* his Brother for an *Heretick*: what diſmal fruits, I ſay, of this ill ſpirit ſoon broke in amongſt the Chriſtians, Hiſtories do ſadly relate; until by

thoſe *feuds* true Religion was ſo decayed, and *Jew* and *Heathen* ſo *diſcouraged* to embrace it, and the Lord ſo offended, that a *General Apoſtacy* prevailed, and God in Judgment gave them over to a pompous looſe formal way, which in proceſs of time Centred in thoſe *Errors and Idolatries* of the preſent Church of *Rome.*

Which may be a warning to all that fear God to take heed of *ſelf conceitedneſs*, and of being wiſe in their own eyes, leſt that bleſſing which we injoy be blaſted with ſuch unkindly heat as tends to *withering* and not refreſhing the tender Plants in Gods Garden. Were men *humble* and meek, they would be more *peaceable*, and love as brethren, and *bear* and *forbear*, and each think other better than himſelf. There is an ill habit ſome men have got to look upon Truths *partially*, exalting one beyond its due place, and neglecting others as eminent and uſeful, whilſt they are altogether taken up and imployed about *That*; whereas Truth is *Intire*, and ſhould be a-like honoured wherever we meet it. All Saints are of the Houſhold of God, and ſhould be reſpected and aſſiſted, not *cenſured* cauſeleſly, or unjuſtly or peeviſhly *grieved.* If this Generation come to ſee decays in Religion [*which I very much fear it will*] this contentious dividing ſpirit will be one principal cauſe, by withdrawing the affections

fections of Profeſſors one from another, and thereby making room for *profaneneſs* or *Popery*, or rather (ſince they always go together) for them both. O! that men would look, if there be not ſome withdrawments in reſpect of *Giſts*, with ſome decays alſo of *Life*, amongſt many of theſe eager contenders, who will have all to *think* as they themſelves do, or elſe they will think the worſt they can of them. I am not perſwading any to a *ſinful compliance*, or joining with a multitude to do evil; but only to a Chriſtian unity and charitable moderation of ſpirit, and to mutual forbearance and love; for very good men may be dark-ſighted in ſome particulars; *John* 1. 46. *Nehem.* 8. 17. Shall all be diſowned that are ignorant of ſome Truth? who then ſhall walk together? Verily none that dwell in *Houſes of Clay*.

Cauſe 2. Another common cauſe of Religion's decay, either in a particular perſon or people, is *over-loving and over-prizing this preſent world*. Thus the Lord complains, That *his Houſe lay waſt*, whilſt they were building their own *ceiled Houſes*, Haggai 1. 4. Men are ſo apt to be encumbred and over-wrought in following theſe temporal drudgeries, that their Soul-work and affairs of an eternal moment are left undone and neglected. *Paul* writes to *Timothy*, that *Demas* had forſaken him, What was the Cauſe? Becauſe he loved this preſent

world, 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. *Judas* had a lingring after the Priests money, when he forsook and betrayed his Master. Alas! how many *Demas's* have there been and are, that let the love of the world eat out of their hearts the love of God! and prove like *Israel*, who while they were gathering *Quails*, got lean Souls, *Psal.* 106. 15 How many *Judas's* too are there that sell their Souls, their Christ, their Crown and Glory for pieces of *Silver*; in whom the cares of this world choak the word that it becomes unprofitable! Therefore *Love not the world*, nor the things that are in the world, for *if any man loveth the world, the love of the father is not in him*, 1 John 2. 15.

Cause 3. Is *wearinesse in a Religious conversation.* When means of spiritual strength are neglected, and love to God and his Truth not preserved; Then Religion becomes a *Burthen*, and men grow weary of it, and then it must needs decay. Some begin well, and seem zealous at their first illumination, and give hopes that they would prove eminent and fruitful Branches in the Church of God; but in little time this holy fervour of Spirit cools, and then they become weary of the service of God, and weary of duty, and a patient waiting upon the Lord in their places, and grow dull, and heavy, and uncheerful in their performances. Thus the Lord complains of *Israel*, *I remember the kind-*

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neſs of thy youth, the love of thine eſpouſals, Jer. 2. 2. But thou haſt been weary of me, O *Iſrael!* Iſa. 43. 22. This wearineſs decayed their Religion; for he ſaith, *Thou haſt not called upon me, neither haſt thou honoured me with thy ſacrifice.* Yet there is no cauſe why men ſhould be weary in Gods ſervice, *Mic.* 6. 3. For his *Commandments are not grievous.* The Apoſtle ſeeing ſo much aptneſs in the *Hebrews* to decline, bids them *look upon Jeſus leſt they ſhould be weary and faint in their minds,* Heb. 12. To be weary and give out before the work be done, and the evening come, is the way to loſe the promiſe. *Be faithful unto the death, and then thou ſhalt receive a crown of life.*

Cauſe 4. The encreaſe of iniquity; as our Lord ſaith, *Becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold,* Matt. 24. 12. When wicked men abound in prophaneneſs and contempt of Grace, and dare drink great draughts of iniquity from the Cellars of Hell, *Jam.* 3. 6. then their abominable practice is ready to harden ſome heedleſs Profeſſors, to let looſe the reins of circumſpection, and to adventure, it may be a little at the firſt, thinking they may do ſo, and ſcape well enough; comparing themſelves to the times that they live in, and ſeeing they are not *ſo bad as moſt men are*; and then one ſin brings on *another*, and hardens, the *cuſtom* taking away the *ſenſe*

of it; and this causeth the Lord to *withdraw* his Grace, 1 *Sam.* 16. 14. which they might have injoyed; and then by degrees they become *leaking vessels*, decaying in grace and godliness.

Cause 5. Sometimes decay in Religion is occasioned, when some that *have been diligent* in the ways of God, and have taught his Truth, and have been *Remembrancers* to his people, are *taken away*, as *Judg.* 2. 7. when those good men were dead, *Joshua* and the Elders, Religion quickly decayed, *vers.* 11. And *Paul* informs the Church at *Ephesus*, that after his departure *grievous wolves would enter in, not sparing the flock; and from among themselves should some arise speaking perverse things, drawing Disciples after them*, Act. 20. 29. which did so come to pass. This the Lord may do in *judgment*, when Souls sit cold and careless, and think it priviledg enough to hear their duty dayly laid before them, and do only *hear* it, and assent unto it, and say, we *heard good things to day*, but go on as they did, without a constant indeavour to improve that which from Gods word was laid before their Souls.

Use 1. This informs us, that when truth fails, the cause is in the creature, their negligence and unfruitfulness. We read that the Lord threatens *a famine of the word*, Amos 8. 11. And we are informed of the cause, *v.* 7. They

They were weary of the ſervice of the Lord, his Ordinances were *a burden*, *When will the Sabbath be gone that we may ſell corn*, ſay they? Which ſheweth the little regard they had to, and the ſmall delight they took in the worſhip of the Lord. Chriſt tells the *Jews*, that the Kingdom of God ſhould be taken from them, becauſe he, the Corner-ſtone, was rejected by them, *Matt.* 21. 42, 43. When a Soul falls into decay, it may ſay, This is the effect of my fruitleſs hearing and careleſs *obeying*; this I may charge my unbelieving heart with, in departing from the living God, *Heb.* 3. 12. This loſs of grace is for want of improvement, for want of zeal, and love, and godlineſs, and perſeverance, to add to my Faith Virtue, *&c.* This was my dallying with evil thoughts, my complying with *carnal company*, my ſuffering a favourable conference with *delightful ſins*, till they diſputed themſelves into my breaſt, like ravening wolves, to devour the life of Religion, and deſtroy my Soul.

Uſe 2. Let none *be offended* as if ſome new thing happened; If they ſee many that profeſs the truth become carnal and dead, let them not conclude that it was not the Truth which they profeſſed; but conſider it was ſo, when there was more eminent gifts than this age is priviledged with, as many in the Church of *Sardis* had a name to *be alive*, *and were dead*.

Rev. 3. 1. And the *Laodiceans* were become luke-warm, ſo that the Lord threatens their deſtruction; yet oft it comes to paſs that the Lords good *old way* that leads to life, is miſtruſted by many who queſtion its being of God, becauſe hypocrites and cold perſons are found therein. But they may know, that there will be *ſinners* found in *Sion* who will be afraid, to whom the day of the Lord will be terrible, *Iſa.* 33. 14. And there be *fooliſh Virgins*, who will not be admitted into the joy of the Lord, *Matt.* 25. The Goſpel which Chriſt preached was *true* and to be owned, though there were *a Judas* among them that Preached it. The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, though *Hymeneus* and *Philetus* be vain *Bablers*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. Gods Word is a ſure and certain rule to direct us; unto which, if we take heed, we ſhall not be deceived, but walk in ſafety and in peace.

Uſe 3. Is it ſo that there are decays in the number of thoſe that profeſs Religion, and in the zeal of their profeſſion, at ſeveral times? then let every Soul be exhorted to take heed, that it ſelf be not one of them in whom it ſo decays; Remember what the Lord ſaith in *Ezek.* 18. 24. *When a righteous man turneth from his righteouſneſs, all his righteouſneſs ſhall not be mentioned: but in his iniquity he ſhall dye.* O Soul! Take heed thou be not of the withered Branches that

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must be burned, *Joh.* 15. 6. Apostate professors are *Monuments of vengeance*; though they have lost their *savour*, yet they will stand as Pillars of *Salt*, a warning to others, that they which *stand may take heed lest they fall*. Know, O Soul! that if thou lose thy zeal, thy righteousness, thou wilt lose the *Promise*, Rev. 2. 10. And if thou lose the Promise, what hast thou to *shew* for the Kingdom? Wilt thou venture thy eternal state without a Promise, nay, against an express Word? *Prov.* 14. 14. *Zeph.* 11. 6. Be not deceived by an evil heart, to depart from the living God; if thy inward man dye, that death will be *deadly*: and except thou repent, it will separate thy *Soul* and *Christ* for ever: Therefore *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*, Ephes. 5. 14. When zeal decays, it is in *particulars*, before it can be general. Christ saith, that the love of *many shall wax cold*; O! take heed, whosoever thou art, that thou be not one of that many, *Heb.* 10. 38.

Use 4. Beware of being a *cause or occasion* to decay zeal and godliness in others by evil *examples*, whereby Souls may be imboldened to sin or *neglect* serving God: O! it will be sad if thy *Neighbours*, or *Children*, or *Servants*, should have cause to say, that thou wast the cause that they were disaffected to Religion, because thou didst profess it, and thy life was

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corrupt; thy heart was filled with paſſion and envy; thy mouth with *vanity*, levity and *bitter words*; thy dealings with men, *fraudulent* and unjuſt; thy behaviour churliſh, contentious, and *brawling* with Neighbours and Family: If ſome of thoſe among whom thou haſt lived (and mighteſt have been an inſtrument of good) ſhould in the day of judgment plead againſt thee, that thou waſt a *cauſe* of their ſin, of their neglect of walking in the ways of God, and ſo ſhould charge thee with their *condemnation*, how wouldeſt thou anſwer it? If thy Children ſhould cry out, O my Father, my Mother, which ſhould have inſtructed and given me good examples, they brought me to this; I ſaw them careleſs in Religion, negligent in duty, unholy in their lives, and I took boldneſs to do ſo too, and ſo at laſt grew worſe and worſe, and became hardened in ſin; it had been better I had never been brought up by them that *profeſſed* to have had Religion, and had it not: O! then take heed of being guilty of the blood of Souls.

Uſe 5. If we do or ſhould live in *a time* when there is a *languiſhment*, or *declining in the power of Godlineſs*; then have we a great and *ſpecial call* to ſtir up all our ſtrength; thus holy *David* witneſſes of himſelf, That when men *made void Gods Law*, then he eſteemed it *in all things to be right, and hated every falſe way*;

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yea, he valued it more than gold, it was ſweeter to him than the Honey comb. Pſal. 119. 128. When *Paul* had ſhewn what declinings there would come, *Act.* 20. 31. He exhorts them to *wait*, and *remember, that for the ſpace of three years he ceaſed not to warn them night and day with tears.* *Peter* likewiſe when he had diſcovered unto them what degenerating times were aproaching, and *ſcoffers* that would ſlight and disbelieve the *promiſe of Chriſts coming*, then he calls upon them, *to grow in grace and in the knowledg of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. When Chriſtians meet with moſt *Temptations*, then is a ſpecial time for them to put on the *whole Armour of God*, that they be not overthrown, and ſcattered in the *Cloudy dark day*, *Ezek.* 34. 12. God took peculiar notice of *Noah* how he *walked uprightly* in a declining time, and provides for his ſafety; ſo he commands the Prieſts that kept his Charge when others went aſtray, they ſhould come *near him to miniſter and to ſtand before him.* Ezek. 44. 15. Therefore let every Soul that loves God ſtand faſt in the Truth, though Error invade on the one hand, and Security on the other, though all the world ſeem *delug'd* with profaneneſs and impiety, yet even then make ye ſtraight ſteps to your feet, and ponder the path of thy God, *and let all thy ways be eſtabliſhed*, Prov. 4. 26.

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Use 6. When the Creature declines in his obedience, then Judgments ſpiritual or temporal do commonly follow. *Rev.* 3. 3. 1 *Cor.* 11. 30. And therefore, 'tis then a time to ſtand in the Gap, and to make up the Breach: When *Iſrael* forgot God their Saviour, *he ſaid he would deſtroy them, had not Moſes his choſen ſtood before him in the Breach*, Pſal. 106. 23. So 'tis ſaid the Lord *ſought for a man to ſtand in the gap before him for the Land, that he ſhould not deſtroy it:* Ezek. 22. 30. When the Lord is offended with them that are called his, for their declinings, and is bringing ſpiritual Judgments, ſuch as famine of the word, removing of the Candleſtick, or giving them up to hardneſs of heart, to walk in their own counſels: This is a Juncture that calls for prayer and all the affections. Now O Chriſtian! if thou haſt any ſoft heart, thou wilt be wreſtling with God, and importuning Heaven with frequent Addreſſes; for if our degeneracy and declinings in our ſpiritual ſtate and religious duties ſhould provoke the Lord to take away the Light of the glorious Goſpel from our children, and bring upon them the Egyptian Darkneſs and Bondage of *Popery*, &c. ſo that in this or another generation they ſhould have cauſe to ſay, O! our Fathers *had peace and truth, and the word of God to feed their Souls but they ſinn'd it away from us their Children; they would not be conten inpeace*

to enjoy it, but muſt fall out about it, and bite and devour one another: They did not prize that precious Goſpel, nor walk worthy of it; therefore is the ſun ſet upon us; our ways dark, our feet fetter'd, and our ſouls ready to periſh for want of that Bread which they were ready to loath. If poſterity, I ſay, ſhould have reaſon thus to complain, would it not be a ſad Legacy to leave our poor Children? Therefore let all that fear God be a *praying* people, and live the life of your prayers, that you may ſee the returns of them in ſhowers of Bleſſings, watering your Souls ſo as to keep them from withering and barrenneſs.

On the other ſide, it is to be conſidered, that ſeeing Religion doth ſometimes proſper and encreaſe, what *uſe* Gods people ſhould make of ſuch a flouriſhing diſpenſation: the Lord doth ſometimes open a door for his word, and ſends it forth with power, and makes way for it, *Act.* 18. 10. And then when it comes to a teachable people, where grace offered hath brought them into a willingneſs to hear, and who do not ſet themſelves againſt truth, by hardning their hearts; but receive the word into honeſt and good hearts, yeilding obedience thereunto, abounding in every grace; they ſoon become a glorious and holy Temple of God, whoſe preſence is promiſed amongſt them, to make them as a watred Garden, like Trees planted by the Rivers ſide.

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Use 1. It being a bleſſed ſtate when the Goſpel is enjoyed in a flouriſhing manner, and our ſouls proſper thereby and grow up into eternal life; that we may attain thereunto, we muſt ripen grace and vertue under the Sun-ſhine of thoſe bleſſed opportunities, and not be like ſome ground that will bring forth corn in ſpring green and flouriſhing, promiſing a fat harveſt, but when the Summer comes that it ſhould ripen and come to perfection, then the ground being unkind it blaſteth, and when harveſt comes there is little elſe but ſtraw and husk, a very lean unprofitable Crop; ſo do many who begin with little means and knowledg and thrive under it; but when a more large Summer of Goſpel-means is allowed them, then they blaſt; the full ſtomack loaths the honey-comb, and thus they wither, before the great harveſt come; ſo that thoſe who for the time ought to be Teachers, have need of being themſelves taught again the firſt Rudiments of Religion, *Heb.* 5. Let us then give ſuch diligent heed to, and make ſo good uſe of the truth we do injoy, that we thereby may be fitted for the great harveſt, and be found Wheat and not Chaff, for the wheat only ſhall be gathered into the Lords Garner, but the chaff muſt be burnt with unquenchable fire. O ſoul! a light and chaffy Religion will not hold weight in Heavens Scales. It may be thy deceitful heart tells thee that a little

little feeble formal cuſtomary Devotion will render thee accepted; but thou art under a miſtake, for the Lord *will fan and thorowly purge his floor*, Luke 3. 17. and *gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity*. Matt. 13. Conſider, that the Lord in giving gifts to men, intended thereby to fit the Creature *to grow up to him in all things who is the Head, even Chriſt*, *Eph.* 4. 15.

Uſe 2. If we have the happineſs to live in a time and place where truth prevails; then let us be ſtirred up to endeavour to continue it, and that muſt be by a perſonal watchfulneſs and diligence to walk faithfully and circumſpectly with an holy zeal, and godly ſincere Love in all Chriſtian duties. Doſt thou complain that truth fails and feareſt that the Glory will depart from *Iſrael*; that *Popery* will prevail, and the Goſpel be ſuppreſſed or baniſht out of theſe Nations? then take away the Cauſe in thy ſelf firſt, and be a pattern of holineſs, be thou a living Saint; and then call others to be ſo too; for if thou call them before, thy carnal life will keep thy words from having any force; if every one could be prevailed with to amend in his own heart and life, this would ſoon accompliſh ſuch a deſirable reformation, that the Goſpel might continue, and its teachers not be removed into corners; the candleſtick was not threatned to be taken away until they had *left*

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their first Love, Rev. 2. 5. The Lord is always with his people, whilst they are with him, and *the Curse causeless shall not come*, Prov. 26. 2. So that it is the Creature that puts from it self the means of eternal life, *Act.* 13. 46. O soul, if thou wouldest have Gospel-mercies continue, then let a Gospel faith and a Gospel-life continue; for if thou do not, yet God may continue it for his mercy-sake and his servants sake, and thou maist die and perish under the abuse of it, and not for want of it; be therefore *blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke*, holding forth the word of truth, *Phil.* 2. 15.

Use 3. Be *thankfull*; If your mercies exceed others, let your praises excel also; *Paul* gives thanks at every remembrance of the Church upon the account of their Gospel-priviledges, *Phil.* 1. 3. O what praises should Christians render to the God of their mercies, for the *gift of his Son*, which makes the Gospel to be *glad tidings* sent to the sons of men, and preserving the word of life from being hid, for giving a light to this generation and to the people of the Land of our Nativity; he might have sent it amongst the Heathens, to *China* and *America*, and those dark corners of the Earth, and *England* might have been without it, and only heard a report of it in another part of the world; But *England* hath been of late

late as the *Nursery* of Saints throughan high hand of God; and if they which are concern'd in that mercy, be not sensible of his goodness, and from a soul-feeling-love give him hearty praises, the Heathen may rise in judgment against them; Let us be thankful not only in rendering the *calves of our lips*, but glorify him with our *bodys and with our spirits which are Gods*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. Labouring to have delight, to honour him and rejoyce, to praise him for seeing his wonderful love; we may experimentally say his loving-kindness is better than life, therefore our souls shall praise him, that our souls may be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and our mouths shall praise him with joyfull lips, *Psal.* 63. 3. That which men speak out of custom, when they say, *I thank God, I praise God*; being intermingled with vain words, when they withour reverence and godly fear, take the Name of God in their mouths, yet not lifting up their hearts to God when they so speak, this is so far from glorifying him, that 'tis in truth but a taking his name in vain, which his Law forbids, *Exod.* 20. Therefore let all that fear God, take heed of this custom praise of the tongue without the heart understandingly lifted up.

Use 4. If we live where Gods word is preached, and many hear and obey the truth, when *many run to and fro, and knowledg is increased,*

Dan. 12. 4. Then as *Joſeph* did in *Egypt* in temporal food, ſo let us do in ſpiritual; that is, be laying up a ſtock of knowledg and all ſpiritual abilities, that if ſuch means ſhould fail either in general or more particular to ſome people, that we may then be like good houſholders, having in our treaſuries things new and old; for how knows any what means he ſhall injoy in time to come, how long God may confine any one under ſome great afflictions, or how he may withdraw his grace, if we do not improve our time and means in a day of grace? the wiſe man bids us go to the Ant and learn to provide in Summer when there is food to be had; and not have it to ſeek in Winter when emptineſs covers the face of the earth, *Prov.* 8.6. Therefore lay up the word in the ſaving-knowledg of it, and in its ſoul-renewing and ſoul-eſtabliſhing power.

Furthermore, In the Words of this Scripture, *Thus ſaith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluſter, and one ſaith, deſtroy it not for a bleſſing is in it; ſo will I do for my ſervants ſake.* We may conſider,

1. By this compariſon, the Lord ſhews that he *ſearcheth before he ſentenceth*; he looks among all the cluſters, to ſee which have Wine in them, that he may not deſtroy the innocent with the guilty, as he ſaith of *Sodom*, Gen. 18. 21. The ſame is ſpoken of *Jeruſalem*, That

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the Lord would ſharch with Candles, and then, that he would puniſh them that were ſetled upon their lees, *Zeph.* 1. 12. Therefore the Lord commands a mark to be ſet upon thoſe that did mourn for ſin, before the man with the ſlaughter-weapon is to deſtroy, *Ezek.* 9. 4.

2. When the Lord is upon a *deſtroying work* among the Sons of men, then there is an interceder for them that have a bleſſing in them; there is one that ſaith deſtroy them not, which is the Vinedreſſer, *Luke* 13. 8.

3. The bleſſing is in them, even *ſpiritual* bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus, *Epheſ.* 1. 3. compared to new Wine, *Mat.* 9. 17. *Luke* 5. 37. When the Lord was threatning to recompence their iniquities into their boſoms, *Verſ.* 6. ſearch is made, as is implied by the word found: For it is a compariſon of a Vineyard corrupted, which the Vine-dreſſer looks into the cluſters to ſee if there be not ſome that have Wine in them, which when he finds, he intercedes the Lord of the Vineyard not to deſtroy them that had this bleſſing in them, with thoſe that had corrupted themſelves. So when the Lord comes to the Church of *Iſrael*, which are his Vineyard, *Iſa* 57. he will judge righteous judgment, ſome ſhall ſing for joy of heart, and others ſhall howl for vexation of ſpirit, *verſ.* 14. So in the time of his Goſpel-Church which is his Vineyard now, *Joh.* 15. 5.

he puts difference between man and man in the ſame ſociety, *Rev.* 3. 4. Thou haſt a few names in *Sardis* that ſhall walk with me in white; not all, except they repent: he that is in the midſt of the Candleſticks looks among the Cluſters, even all the Congregations, into every heart; and when he finds this ſpiritual Bleſſing of ſaving-Grace coming from the Spirit of God, he will own it, and intercede for it; ſaying, deſtroy it not, there is faith in it, zeal in it, the love of God in it; the Lord anſwers, I will not deſtroy it; ſo that deſtruction and preſervation may be the lot of them that are of one and the ſame Congregation, ſome may periſh though others may be preſerved.

The next Obſervation from the words may be this:

Doctrine 2. That *ſpiritual Bleſſings are* Securing-Priviledges *in the worſt of times.*

There are *Three* times that are called *evil*, though they were not created ſo, nor are ſo in themſelves, but by reaſon of ſin they become ſo to ſinners.

1. The day of *ſickneſs and death*, *remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not*, Eccl. 12. 1. Job 27. 20.

2. When the Lord is executing ſome great *Judgments* in this life, *Amos* 6. 3. *Ye that put far*

far away the eail day, compared with *verſe* 14. and *Jer.* 25. 29. *Amos* 5. 13.

3. The *laſt day*, or day of *Judgment*, when ſinners muſt appear; *the Lord hath made all things for himſelf, even the wicked for the day of evil*, Prov. 16. 4.

To prove this, I ſhall for the *Comfort* of the godly, collect together ſome Scriptures that plainly ſhew that *a ſtate of Grace* will find ſecurity in all theſe times.

1. Death, though it be the *King of terrors*, Job 18. 14. yet a gracious ſoul that hath this Bleſſing in it, is ſecure, and *ſhall not be afraid of the tidings of it: his heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord*, Pſal. 112. 7. indeed graceleſs ſouls, death comes on them like a tempeſt, *terrors take hold of them like waters, and as a ſtorm they are hurried out of their place, for God ſhall caſt upon him, and not ſpare: he would fain flee out of his hand*, Job 27. 20. *But the righteous hath hope in his death*, Prov. 10. 32. *They are taken away from the evil to come, they ſhall enter into peace, they ſhall reſt in their beds, each one walking in his uprightneſs*, Iſa. 27. 2. whence we learn, that grace and godlineſs dwelling in the ſoul, and exerciſed in the life, will render ſuch comfort and ſupport in a dying day, as to get above all fear of death; becauſe *the ſpirit of God beareth witneſs with their ſpirits that they are the children of God*, Rom. 8. 16. when they are

here, they are ſtrangers on the earth, they ſeek a city to come; therefore to go hence, is but to go home to their Fathers houſe, where Chriſt is *preparing Manſions for them*, Joh. 14. 2. *and will come again and receive them to himſelf, that where he is, there they may be alſo:* this hath made Chriſt an Martyrs die with ſuch courage, that hath even daunted their enemies. Such as live without grace, muſt die without hope, or have a periſhing hope, which will be as the giving up of the Ghoſt, *Job* 11. 20. and 8. 3. Were men and women ſo wiſe as to conſider their latter end, and ſeriouſly and in good earneſt, lay to heart the dreadful thoughts which accompany poor dying creatures that are void of grace, and ſo without God, without hope; ſurely they would not dare ſleep, (leſt it ſhould be their laſt ſleep) until they had endeavoured a new-born ſtate; and yet perſons are ſo apt to put off theſe thoughts, with which they ſhould comfort themſelves when death comes, as if they queſtioned whether it would come or no, *O that they were wiſe, that they would conſider their latter end*, Deut. 32. 29. When death is every day carried by meditations in our breaſt, it becomes our familiar acquaintance, its terror is loſt; but when man will not think of it ſo as to watch every day in expectations for its approach, that ſoul will not be prepared for it, nor contented with it.

2. When

2. When the Lord is executing Temporal or Spiritual *Judgments*, a child of grace who lives under his fathers blessing, is secured: for all the instances of God's dealing in former times with, and his promises made to his people, shew, that either he delivers them from, or supports them in the greatest of calamities. *Noah* and *Lot* were delivered from the Judgments of their times, *Gen.* 7. 1. and 19. 16. God tells all Ages after them why they were delivered, because they were his, he did know them to be men that feared him, and were found righteous in their generation: *Jeremiah* is secured in that sore captivity, *Jer.* 39. 14. Thus we see that God doth sometimes deliver his from the stroak of Judgments; and when he brings them thorough them, it is to better them, for his sanctifying-presence is with them; *some of them of understanding shall fall to try them, and to purge them, and to make them white,* Dan. 11. 35. so also saith the Lord, *two parts shall be cut off and die, and a third part shall be left therein, and I will bring the third part thorough the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tryed, they shall call on my name, and I will hear them.* Zec. 13 9. and that these benefits may be effected, the Lord will be with them *to work all their works in them,* Isa. 26. 12. and 43. 2. for though their outward man perish, yet their *inward is renewed day by day*; they

ſhall go home to their father with gain, die the moe humble, the more holy, and ſo be the more happy; but when a Judgment ſnatcheth away one that is without this bleſſing of ſaving Grace, it is like a Jaylor that takes the Malefactor, to put him in the dungeon of the grave, until the Aſſizes come to be arraigned, for all their infidelity and diſobedience. But where this bleſſing of Grace is as *Oyl* in the veſſel, it helps them to light in the darkeſt time, ſo that when they *are tryed, they ſhall come forth as gold*, Job 23. 10.

3. *Sanctifying-grace* is an antecedent to *Glory*. and joyned together, *Pſal.* 84. 11. ſo whoſoever have and keep this bleſſing in them, Chriſt will declare them to be the *bleſſed of his Father* in the great day when they ſhall ſtand before him, *Mat.* 25. 34. which bleſſing is everlaſting, they are *bleſſed for evermore*: the Lord ſheweth fully in *Malachy* the ſecure ſtate the godly gracious Souls ſhall be in at that day, which is called the *day of evil*, ſaying, *Behold the day cometh that ſhall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly ſhall be as ſtubble, and the day that cometh ſhall burn them up.* This is a terrible day indeed, and an evil day to all that do wickedly, *Mal.* 4. 1. But is it ſo to all? ſee *verſe* 2 *but unto you that fear my name ſhall the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his wings, and ye ſhall go forth and*

grow

grow up as Calves of the ſtall: from whence it appears that that very day which is called the day of evil in reſpect of ſinners, ſhall be a glorious and joyful day to thoſe that fear God, their Sun ſhall riſe which they have long looked for, and prayed for, and waited for; this is the morning when the upright ſhall have the dominion, *Pſal.* 49. 14 ſuch a glorious morning as hath not been from the foundations of the world; O it is ſin that makes it to be an evil day; for the *righteous ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father*, Mat 13. 43. Therefore if we would have that day be a good day, we muſt in a Scripture-ſenſe be good men and good women, for otherwiſe we muſt not expect it a good day; for at the end of the world *the Angels ſhall come forth and ſever the wicked from among the juſt, and ſhall caſt them into the furnace of fire, there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth*, Mat. 13. 49. but when they *ceaſe to do evil and learn to do well*, then the Lord calls them to reaſon together, *though your ſins were as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as wool*; ſo then ſpiritual bleſſings are ſecuring Priviledges in the time of temporal Judgments, *the day of death, and at the judgment to come*, Rev. 7. 14. Dan. 12. 13. Rom. 8. 28. For the tryal of our own hearts whether they are of the Cluſter where this new wine of Grace is found, we may do well to conſider by Scripture-evidence the Properties

perties of a ſoul indued with ſaving-Grace, that none may deceive themſelves in taking moral indowments and a civilized life to be that ſtate of Grace that hath the promiſe of Glory, of which *Paul* ſpeaks, which is as the life of holy performance, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. even *to ſerve God with reverence and godly fear*, Heb. 12. 28.

Property 1. A gracious ſoul *prizeth the duties of Religion above and beyond all other performances*: the Lord commends *Mary*, becauſe ſhe prized her duty of hearing Gods Word, when there was ſome lawful work ſhe might have been imployed in, as *Martha* was in ſerving of honourable Gueſts; yet ſhe neglects all that, to be hearing when Chriſt was preaching; ſhe prized her duty which concerned heavenly things; and the Lord left his approbation upon record of her choice, *Luk.* 10. 42. And all Gods people who have Grace, do demonſtrate it, by preferring their duties beyond all worldly performances. *Daniel* preferred his duty to the hazard of his life; he would not leave praying though he go to the Lions den for it, *Dan.* 6. 10. *Paul* counted not his life dear unto himſelf, that he might finiſh his courſe, even the Miniſtry that he had received of the Lord, *Act.* 20. 24. the nature of Grace is to ſeek to *pleaſe God*, becauſe it comes from God, *Joh.* 1. 17. you may make a gracious ſoul part with *Wealth*

and

and *Health* to do you ſervice; but his duty, his *heavenly work*, his Fathers *Imployment* appointed him till his Lord return, this he will not part with, or lay by, to pleaſe man, nor to pleaſe ſelf: natural men marvel that ſincere Chriſtians do not *leave praying* and performing other acts of Religion when the powers of the world *forbid* them; but they know not that it is the grace of God which conſtrains them; it is *that* thoſe oppoſe, who perſecute and find fault with them for ſerving their God according to his requirements, whilſt fooliſh worldlings prefer only things below, and run madding after *Money* and *Pleaſures*, ſpend their days, waſt their lives, proſtitute their *Conſciences*, throw away their *Souls*, and all to work out their own condemnation; a ſoul adorned with Grace, looks with *indifferency* and ſlight affection on all things here, that they may not *kill his duty*; for if they do, his ſoul *dieth* next, if he do not recover the life of his duties; if you take away from a Chriſtian his Lands, his Houſes, and Goods, he matters it not much, he ſtill can *live*, for *his life is hid with God*; but if once you can take away his *Religion*, ſtifle or ſupplant his duties, his faith, his prayers, love and hope, and the exerciſe of them, his reading, hearing, and meditation; then you endanger his *life*, if not quite kill him; for except he retrieve them, he will ſoon be a dead man, yea

twice

twice dead and pluckt up by the roots; this consideration also moves every gracious Soul to *esteem his duty*, for you may discern whether you have Grace ruling in your hearts by your esteeming the service of God above worldly things, *Matt.* 6. 21.

Property 2. When Grace rules the heart, that man or woman *stands in awe of Gods word*, Psal. 119. 161. they *tremble* at it, *Isa.* 66. 5. they are not stony-hearted, nor have *steeled foreheads* that will not melt under the word of God, as some had in *Israel*, Zec. 7. 12. their hearts are tender, they humble themselves when they hear the word, 2 *Chron.* 22. 19. it takes impression upon them, like soft *wax* of the Seal; the stamp and *divine Character* abides there, because Grace hath mollified the heart, and made it sensible that the Gospel is the *power of God unto salvation*, the will of God enacted and determined in the high Court of Heaven, and declared with signs and miracles; but where Grace is not, there is not this holy regard to Gods word; they can break it and not tremble, hear those terrible threatnings against sins which they are guilty of, and yet little fear them, *Jer.* 6. 15. Oh! it is a *miserable state* to be with them involved in a stony-hearted frame; to be without saving-*Grace* is so wretched a condition, that a man that knows the danger of it, would not be in it,

and

and live and die ſo, for ten thouſand worlds; for what can be more ſad and deplorable, than when the Great and Mighty God, Creator and Preſerver of Heaven and Earth, is not ſtood in awe of, his Word not regarded, his Counſel rejected? No marvel therefore if *Paul* ſeeing *Iſrael* left without ſaving-Grace, is ſo tranſported with compaſſionate affection, as almoſt to wiſh himſelf *ſeparated from Chriſt for them*, Rom. 9. 3.

Property 3. There will be an *Abhorrence of evil*, yea all appearance of evil; a *voluntary* permitting of ſin cannot conſiſt with Grace, *Joh.* 8. 34. and 1 *Joh.* 3. 8. for ſaith the Apoſtle, *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. Moſt men and women amongſt us, who are called Chriſtians, take it ill, if any do but *queſtion* whether they have Grace or not: O therefore, that they would try and prove it *themſelves*, by its properties, and fruits, and operations; for as it is the Lord that *giveth grace*, Zec. 12. 10. ſo where it is, it will not be *idle*, but active, bringing forth fruit, *Gal.* 5. 22. *now the fruits of the ſpirit are love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance*, &c. tell me, O ſoul, or ſatisfie thy ſelf, haſt thou theſe fruits? canſt thou ſay it in truth without ſelf-flattery and belying thine own condition? ſearch in good earneſt, look them over again and again, do they

indeed

indeed dwell in thee? if not, leave off thy talk, that thou haſt Grace in a ſaving-ſenſe: but on the contrary, inſtead of theſe, haſt thou not the works of the fleſh predominate in thee, as adultery, wrath, ſtrife, envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revilings, and the reſt of the works of darkneſs exercis'd by thee? it may be thy conſcience may tell thee, that *all* theſe ſins are not actually chargeable on thee; there are but few that are guilty of all ſuch abominations; but St. *James* ſaith, *he that offendeth in one point, offendeth in all*, Jam. 2. 10. Murder may be committed by *Hatred*, 1 Joh. 3. 15. Adultery by *Luſt*, Matt. 5. 28. and ſo in other ſins: It often happens that a mans *complexion* or conſtitution will not admit him to commit certain particular ſins, or he may decline them for *Reputation* or worldly *Intereſt*; all this is no ſymptome or effect of *Grace*; for if the heart be carnal, or filled with ſecret corruptions carryed ſtill by a *bias* to the world, not leaving it but upon outward reſpects, then when it comes and offers it ſelf on their own terms, and to their own liking, ſuch perſons will undoubtedly cloſe with it, ſince they are not mov'd with right principles, nor hate and forbear ſin as they ought to do out of conſcience towards God, becauſe he is *diſhonoured and diſpleaſed thereby*, which ſhould be the grand cauſe of their averſion; and therefore ſuch a *civil*, *moral*, or *politick* conver-

converſation alone is far from a ſtate of Grace.

Property 4. Grace *inclines to perſeverance*, to go on in a zealous progreſs in every Chriſtian duty, to preſs forward and not move as the *door upon the hinges*, in a cuſtomary way, and be never the better; for the Grace of God *teacheth us to live godly, and righteouſly, and ſoberly, in this preſent world*, Tit. 2. *Paul* through the Grace of God had a perſevering zeal to preſs *forward towards the mark of the price of the high calling*, Phil. 3. 14. *the path of the Juſt is as a ſhining light that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day*, Prov. 4. 18. As the weight in the Clock ſets all the wheels a going, ſo Grace keeps forward the whole courſe of Religion, ſtrengthens the feeble knees, and hands hanging down; when a Beleiver is dull and heavy, that he knows not how to pray, nor what to pray for, then he goeth to God through Jeſus Chriſt, of whoſe fulneſs we receive all Grace, and who promiſeth to pour upon his ſervants the ſpirit of *Grace* and ſupplication, his ſpirit helping their infirmities; *he ſtrengthens them with ſtrength in their ſouls*, Pſal. 138. 3. then *they mount up with wings as an Eagle, they run and are not weary, they walk and faint not*, Iſa. 40. 31. Thus the *Iſrael* of God goeth toward their *land of promiſe* under the conduct of Gods Word and Spirit, like the *cloud* and *pillar*, having the trumpet of the Goſpel ſounding forwards;

wards their Camp, saying, *so run that you may obtain*; *and come with me from Lebanon my spouse*, *with me from Lebanon*, Cant. 4. 8. *Lebanon* was a most pleasant place, beset with stately Cedars; now we want many a call from the vain pleasures and profits of the world, to follow Christ in holy perseverance, for it is the *continuance in well doing* that hath the promise of *glory*, *and immortality*, *honour*, *and eternal life*, Rom. 2. 7. which should encourage us to remove the stakes of our tents of worldly-mindedness, and go forward, lest we die in our lingerings, and come short of the eternal Rest. To help us herein, let us exercise Grace to work up our souls to a zealous frame fit for perseverance, that it may appear that our Religion hath something in it that comes from heaven, and is leading us to heaven where our God, and our Christ, and our everlasting Mansions are, which will in due time recompence all our endeavours with an inexpressible, more than *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*.

Property 5. Where Grace is, there is *love to God*, *the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost*, Rom. 5. 5. through Grace the heart is drawn to obey that great Precept, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart*, *and with all thy soul*, *and with all thy might*, Deut. 6. 5. When love to God dwells in the heart, the out-goings of it will appear

in

in keeping his appointments, as it is ſaid, *Solomon loved the Lord, and walked in the ſtatutes of David his father*, in the firſt of his Reign, 1 *Kings* 3. 3. So *John* ſaith, *this is the love of God that we keep his commandments*, 1 Joh. 5. 3. Perſons may ſuppoſe they love God, when they are not in a ſtate of Grace, but live in ſin; but Chriſt ſpeaks otherwiſe, Joh. 14. 23, 24. from whence they may know, that if God ſay *repent of thy ſin*, and yet they rejoice in ſin, it doth plainly ſhew they love not God; doth Chriſt ſay *he that loveth me will keep my words?* and wilt thou ſay *thou loveſt him*, and thy life proves that thou *doeſt not keep his words?* and if thy Conſcience be not dead, if thou wouldeſt let it ſpeak, it would tell thee to thy face, that thou doſt not love God on Scripture-account, and it would tell thee that the ſame may be proved by thy whole life; thy graceleſs heart proves it, thy unſavoury language proves it, thy carnal converſation doth evidence that it is but talk without truth, or a conceit without ground, when thou ſayeſt or thinkeſt that thou loveſt God: *but whoſo keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him*, 1 Joh. 2. 5. That ſoul may be confident, and hath ground to believe that it is in the love of God, for Chriſt ſaith of ſuch a one, *my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him*, Joh. 14. 23.

Property 6. A gracious ſoul by Faith applyeth *Juſtification to it ſelf*, by the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſhedding of his blood for the remiſſion of ſins, *Heb.* 10. 14. *Rom.* 5. 9. *Col.* 1. 20, 21, 22. The humble Soul to whom Grace is promiſed, is willing to look upon all its own righteouſneſs as *filthy rags*; can expect nothing from it ſelf but wrath; knows it ſelf in an undone condition, crys, *God be mereiful to me a ſinner*; and with an humble boldneſs, looks upon Gods everlaſting Love and takes courage, becauſe it hears a heavenly voice, ſaying, *come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, I will refreſh you, and you ſhall find reſt to your ſouls*, Mat. 11. 28. and having received by Faith the aſſurance of an intereſt in that great *Sacrifice*; Chriſt is now become to ſuch ſouls *wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. Then do they take to this *city of refuge*, and lay hold of the everlaſting love of an everlaſting God; by Faith they embrace all the gracious *Promiſes* of *things preſent and things to come*, which they ſee *their own* through Chriſt Jeſus, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. Now none but Chriſt! who is appointed of God to be a *Prince* and a *Saviour*, for Juſtification and Salvation; then they reſolve through grace *to die to ſin, and live to righteouſneſs*, ſince there was ſo much love in Chriſt as to die for their ſins; now are

not

not his Commandments grievous, but they go cheerfully on in their dutys, for they know that *their labour is not in vain in the Lord*, and so they are not soon moved away from the hope of the Gospel, for they have an Anchor cast within *the vail*, Heb. 6. So these gracious souls that have a blessing in them, receive Christ in his dearest relations, as a portion for ever; the Lord owns these believing people, who were *children of death*, until they were received to favour upon *covenant-terms of life*; and now having *fellowship with the Father and the Son*, 1 Joh. 1. 3. as living stones in Gods building, they *grow up an holy temple in the Lord*, Ephes. 2. 21.

Property 7. Moreover a gracious soul is *possessed with patience*, as the common frame of his life. *I waited patiently for the Lord*, saith *David*, Isa. 37. 7. Our Lord having lay'd before his Disciples the great tribulations of the last times, gives them this charge, *in your patience possess your souls*, Luk. 21. 19. *Job* is recorded to be indued with much patience; but we read also that he was a man *fearing God*; he was a man who had other vertues, as *love* to God, and *faith* that did accompany and assist his patience, to carry through such great troubles; good men are liable to trouble as well as others, *Psal.* 73. but have something to bear up their Spirits under them; every re-

membrance of Gods promiſe, that *all things ſhall work together for good to them that love God*, is a ſtay of the mind in the greateſt tribulation; for as it hath hope of ſtrength from God, ſo it expects benefit by the affliction, and therefore a patient waiting is not ſo burthenſome, though they be in great diſtreſs, as it is to a man whoſe portion is in this life; to thoſe that have ſet their hearts on things below, when pain or loſs comes, it takes more impreſſion there, becauſe theſe things are the things they chiefly look at, and eſteem; therefore you ſhall hear ſuch very impatient when calamity comes: O! ſaith one, I did not think of this trouble, this fire, this ſhipwrack, this unthrifty ſon, this ſick bed, this dying hour comes ſo ſuddenly upon me, how can I bear it? indeed it is a ſad ſtate for a poor creature to be driven out of his houſe, and know not where to get another; ſo a creature that is ſummoned out of his houſe of clay, and hath no good aſſurance of an houſe from Heaven, but hath ground to fear that his next ſenſible lodging may be in everlaſting flames, or if he loſe his goods hath reaſon to believe that all his portion is gone, his portion being in this life, *Pſal.* 17. and then he is undone; indeed here is little ſupport to help patience; for when goods, eaſe, and life goeth from ſuch an one, what hope is there but an undone ſtate, to be carried to priſon for debts unpaid; there

to lye in utter darkneſs for evermore, which is the *ſecond death*; but a child of Grace knowing that when this cottage of clay ſhall fall to the earth, there is an houſe from Heaven eternal, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. which *fadeth not away*, can therefore cheerfully ſay, *Lord now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace*, Luk. 2. 29. in the loſs of all things can quiet himſelf, ſaying, *the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, bleſſed be his name*, for if his wiſdom ſee that they can ſerve him better in the want of all theſe things, they can ſay, *thy will be done*; if the Lord will chaſtiſe them to bring them nearer to himſelf, they taſting of that benefit, conclude it *was good for them that they were afflicted*; for it is the Lord, *let him do whatſoever he pleaſe*.

There might be ſome other properties mentioned to prove ſaving Grace to dwell in the ſoul where they are found; but I ſhall for brevity paſs them over, and rather ſpeak a little to a few *Priviledges* that ſuch a ſoul enjoys, and with a ſhort Application conclude.

1. *Priviledg.* Grace ſanctifieth. *Paul* who was choſen to be an Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, preaching to them Gods love, in accepting them to be his people, ſhows how they come to obtain that priviledg, *Rom.* 11. 22. *viz.* by *the goodneſs of God*, and elſewhere *the remnant of Iſrael that believed obtained mercy through grace*, Rom. 11. 6. and that the offering up of the *Gentiles* was *ſanctified by the Holy*

Ghoſt, Rom. 15. 16. ſo they having accepted of Grace offered, and having received it, were ſo ſanctified, that the Apoſtle calls them *beloved of God* called to be *Saints*, Chap. 1. 7. The Church of *Corinth* are informed or reminded what they ſometimes were, and what they were then, and how they came to be ſo, *viz.* it was by being *ſanctified* by the Spirit of God, 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. this is a great priviledg promiſed to Gods people, which they are to know is Gods gift, it is the Lord that ſanctifieth them, *Exod.* 31. 13. there is much need of this Grace of our God, to aſſiſt us in ordering of our ſpiritual affairs in our own Breaſt: there is ſo much wandering, ſo many weariſome gueſts of vain thoughts that are to be unlodged thence, and there is ſuch an undiſpoſedneſs to lively performance of duty, ſo much want of a daily revival of vertue, and to be kept in an holy frame, that we had need to uſe all means to obtain and increaſe Grace.

2. *Priviledg.* As grace *ſanctifies*, ſo it ſatisfies and comforts a ſoul, it being a work of the Spirit of a gracious God, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. *Epheſ.* 3. 8. 1 *Cor.* 2. 4. operating with his word to ſatisfie aud comfort his people. *David* longed after the Lord, and thirſted for him. O! how did he want more of Gods preſence in his Sanctuary, to injoy more Grace, and expect ſatisfaction by it; *My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs*, Pſal. 63. 5. and the ſame Prophet

Prophet ſpeaking of the Saints priviledg, ſaith, they ſhall be *abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thine houſe*, Pſal. 36. 8. this is ſoul-ſatistying living water that comes out from the Sanctuary, the promiſed comfort, the experienc'd felicity of the *heaven-born ſons of* Zion; this ſatisfies them in priſon-holes, and in great tribulation, when their enemies wonder what it is that ſupports them ſo cheerfully to hold their integrity: thoſe that have no other comfort but what ſprings from *goods*, and friends, and children, will find them but *cold* comforts ere long, when they with weepings muſt bid their laſt farewel to them all; O then this comfort that comes from above, will be an abiding comfort, that no trouble can out-ballance, nor ſorrow diſpoſſeſs.

3. *Priviledg.* Grace *prepares for, and guides a ſoul to his everlaſting inheritance*; ſince we are aſſiſted thereby to mortifie ſin, and perform duty, *Rom.* 8. 13, 26. had thoſe fooliſh Virgins that we read muſt miſs entering in, kept this *Oyl* in their veſſels, they would have been prepared for their Lords coming, for they that had it are ſaid to be ready, *Mat.* 25. 10. this is it that makes the Kings daughter to be all *glorious within*, ſhe hath the white *beauty-ſhews* of Grace, that make her lovely in the eye of her Lord; ſhe hath on the wedding Garment, *Pſal.* 45. 13. 14. 'tis this that guides a ſoul

into truth, *Joh.* 16. 13. ſo that it's not Wit, nor Learning, nor Study, nor Morality, that altogether accompliſheth a man to be a *Chriſtian*, or a *teacher of Gods word*, yet they are ſerviceable in their place to further a man in the ſame, and therefore not to be ſlighted, but endeavoured after; yet ſome of the greateſt Learned, have been the *greateſt Hereticks*: who a greater School-man than *Aquinas?* who more eminent in *Quirks* of Logick than *Arius* and many others? ſo that we may ſay with *Paul, not many wiſe men after the fleſh*; but this our heavenly guide fail's not them who are lead thereby; therefore quench not the Spirit which God hath promiſed to them that obey him, *Act.* 5. 32. and in the *Proverbs*, ſaith, *Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my ſpirit unto you*, Prov. 1. 23. which is a great encouragement to endeavour after ſaving-grace, that ſoul-bleſſing which is of neceſſity to eternal life, *Rom.* 8. 9. Many and unſpeakable are the benefits of Grace which neither pen nor tongue can expreſs; but theſe few here noted, may excite our dull affections the more vigorouſly to labour after it.

Uſe 1. This may ſtir up to a *ſtrict examination* of our ſouls, whether we can find this bleſſing in us; a Chriſtian's work is heart-work, the inward man is renewed, *Jer.* 4. 14. *Epheſ.* 4. 23. it is *ſafe* to *try*, and dangerous to be ſe-

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cure without tryal in a matter of ſuch concernment; ſee and know certainly whether you have ſaving-Grace or not, examine whether there be the properties flowing from it, whether you eſteem duty to God and obedience to his word very highly? do you ſtand in awe and ſhun ſin? have you perſevering zeal and love to God? and ſaving-Faith and Patience, and all other vertues growing up in you, which we find in Scripture do demonſtrate a work of Grace wrought? and all this for the Lord's ſake that commands it, and thy ſouls ſake that hath need of it? deal uprightly with thy ſoul, and do not endeavour only to ſilence an unquiet conſcience, but to renew a *right ſpirit within thee*; that when the Lord comes to ſearch his Vineyard, he may find *new wine* in thee, and ſay, *deſtroy it not, there is a bleſſing in it.*

Uſe 2. Let this teach us to *endeavour the continuance of Grace*; hold faſt Grace, *Heb.* 12. 28. that we leak not out any attainment we injoy; and take warning by that miſerable loſs of *Saul*, who for his diſobedience ſo offended the Lord, that the Spirit of *the Lord departed from him*, 1 Sam. 16. 14. O have you ſometimes had any attainments that did *warm* your Souls, and compoſe your ſpirits to ſerve the Lord; and do you find that there are abatements upon your heart? then look about you,

ſee

ſee what hath opened a door to leak out thoſe injoyments; ſurely ſome enemy hath done this, ſome ſin, ſome worldly imagination or carnal luſt, ſome ſinful compliance, ſome omiſſion of duty, or committing of evil hath done this miſchief; ſearch out where the cauſe is, for ſure there is ſome *Achan* in thy Camp that muſt be *ſtoned* to death, or otherwiſe thou wilt not recover thy loſt or decayed Pearl; and therefore pray with *David, Lord take not thy holy ſpirit from me, but reſtore the joy of thy ſalvation*, Pſal. 51. and that he would renew his quickning ſpirit, *Pſal.* 84. 18. that thou mayeſt praiſe him when he ſhall inlarge thine heart.

Uſe 3. *Improve Grace*, be not negligent; idleneſs cauſeth *ſpiritual Poverty* as well as *temporal*; we are counſel'd not to be *ſlothful in buſineſs*, Rom. 12. 11. but be diligent, that we may be found of him in peace; that ſervant that did not improve his Talent, ſhall be blamed & ſentenced ſaith the Lord, and they that make a diligent uſe of the abilities given them, ſhall be accepted; take heed of a *dull diſpoſition* in Religion, remember that the Kingdom of heaven ſuffers *violence, and the violent takes it by force*, Matt. 11. 12. Grace is like a grain of Muſtard-ſeed growing up in a well-tilled heart, to viſible branches of a godly life; but ſlothfulneſs will let the heart be overrun with *weedy* corruptions, and will not find time nor take pains to exerciſe thoſe abilities

they

they have; though they will allow both time and industry to *till their land*, and improve their *goods*, but little time will be allowed in things of eternal concernment: there is so much time to eat, drink, and sleep, and many other things for pampering or adorning the body, that there is with many little or scarceany time left to read, pray, hear the Word, exhort and comfort others, visit the sick, examine their own hearts and lives, and such like duties incumbent on Christians: but know, O man, that though thou canst not find time sufficient to serve God in, yet thou must find a time to die in ere long; as much hast as thou art in now, thou must have leisure for that; and lay all thy work aside, and leave all thy actings upon the stage of this world like a dream that is past, *Psal.* 75. 5. and it will be reported in thy neighbourhood ere long, that such a man or such a woman is dead to day or to night; therefore find time and take pains to seek after Grace and improve it, for it is a good thing that the heart be *established with grace*, Heb. 13. 9. Take therefore a few Motives thereunto.

Motive 1. Consider that Christ came to bless, that we might *inherit a blessing*, the high Priest under the Law had three services incumbent on his Office; First, to *offer sacrifices*. Secondly, to *burn incense*. Thirdly, to *bless the people* in the name of the Lord, *Numb.* 6. 23, 27.

1 *Chron.*

1 *Chron.* 23. 13. All which our *great high Prieſt* compleatly accompliſh't when he had *offered himſelf a ſacrifice for ſin, and ſat down at the right hand of God to make interceſſion for all Saints*, which is as incenſe moſt precious; and alſo he came to bleſs them in turning his people from their iniquities, *Act.* 3. 26. ſo then by purchaſe he *merited*, by interceſſion *obtained*, and by bleſſing *beſtowed* all the riches of Grace and Glory upon believers; which being conſidered, ſhould animate our deſires after the ſpritnal bleſſing, ſince it ſprings from the love of God, and is convey'd to us through Chriſt Jeſus.

Motive 2. Conſider that *Eſau* who ſlighted but his Father *Jacobs* bleſſing, had great diſadvantage by it; for ſelling his Birthright of the Elder, he had no right to the bleſſing of the Elder, which ſhewed his little regard thereto, *Heb.* 12. 17. though afterwards when he heard that *Jacob* was made his Lord, he too late *lift up his voice and wept*, Gen. 27. 38. This ſhould move perſons to eſteem of a Heaven-born-birth-priviledg, to be *Abrahams* children; for *if ye believe, then are you* Abrahams *ſeed*, Gal. 3. 29. If you ſo believe as to be Chriſts, then your Father's bleſſing belongs to you; for if you are Heaven-born children, you have a promiſe to inherit a bleſſing, 1 *Pet.* 3. 9. Chriſt pronounceth them bleſſed, *Matt.* 5. and will make them ſo, *Matt.* 25. 34. Therefore let us be careful

that

that we be not with Lordly *Esau*, taking our Pleasures, and *hunting* after this world, and so lose our part of this blessing, and then when it is too late, weep and mourn for the loss of so rich a Mercy; wait at home at your fathers house as *Jacob* did, and be humble as he was, watch and pray that you may get the blessing; though the *Esaus* of this world hate you for it, yet God will be with you as he was with him for ever.

SERMON

SERMON V.

3 Joh. Verſ. 2.

Beloved, I wiſh above all, that thou mayeſt proſper and be in health, even as thy ſoul proſpereth.

THE Penman of this Epiſtle had in his former, written largely of that excellent Vertue *Love*, which appears to have dwelt moſt plenteouſly in the breaſt of this holy and good man, a beloved of the Lord, ſo that he did write from a ſenſe of the uſe and excellency thereof that he had upon his own heart, that the ſame precious Grace might rule and abound in others as it did in himſelf both towards God and his people, and this without reſpect of perſons, as we are commanded, *Jam.* 2. 3. that it may appear that they love the Head, when their affections are inlarged towards all the members of that body which is his: a thing very much wanting in moſt ages, and as it ſeems at the time of this holy mans writing; for as other vertues decreaſed, ſo did this alſo, becauſe when

when evil gets into the heart, Love is quickly rooted out; when the poor envy, or at leaſt decline their reſpects to them that are rich, being diſſatisfied with their own condition wherein the gracious Providence of God that orders all things for the beſt hath placed them; whereas they ought in whatever ſtate to be content, and rejoice in anothers good as in their own: and on the other ſide, thoſe that enjoy plenty of theſe outward things, grieve and deſpiſe thoſe that are poor, and becauſe they ſtand in need of their aſſiſtance, harbour hard thoughts of them that they are idle, or waſtful; and ſo theſe mutual ſurmiſings draw back their affections from each other, having alſo too often a great mixture of Pride flowing from thoſe corruptions, which are apt to *puff up* in the fulneſs of temporal injoyments, and alſo when there fall out differences about worldly things, theſe being too much loved, they do many times break off that love which ſhould be amongſt Chriſtians; and that which is ſtill more ſad, is when there is a diſagreement about the underſtanding of Scripture, when mens apprehenſions and judgments do not juſt meet in one and the ſame perſwaſion, then inſtead of informing each other in love, they do by violent and hot contention, drive out that Chriſtian love that *ſhould cover a multitude of infirmities*, 1 Pet. 4. 8. this love being broken, is very hardly recovered, as ſad experience proves;

proves; it were to be wiſhed that there were not ſome of this diſpoſition among all ſorts of perſwaſions called Chriſtians, who too little read or mind as they ſhould, the writings of St. *John*, who would teach them other things, *he that hateth his brother is in darkneſs, even until now*, 1 Joh. 2. 9. yea he is a *murderer, and no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*, 1 Joh. 3. 15. nor let theſe and other Scriptures be wreſted by any, ſaying they are *no brethren* that do not believe and practiſe as they themſelves do; indeed *Job*'s three friends ſeemed wiſe and religious, and yet they condemned *Job unjuſtly*; and when they had ſaid what they could, the Lord reproves them for condemning the *innocent*; it will not be taken well when men ſhall aſſume to themſelves above what is within the bounds of humility and charity; *Diotrephes* oppoſed *John* that preacher of love; he caſt them out of the Church, would not own them as *brethren* whom *John* owned, and received them not which he ſent, 3 *Joh.* 10. that ſpirit of *Diotrephes* doth and ever did oppoſe love, and whereſoever it prevails it doth rent and divide: O that there were in our ſelfiſh age many more than there are, that *John-like*, were of a healing ſpirit! that Charity might ſtand in the gap and plead for *unity* among the children of God, and that all ſelf-ſeeking intereſt and petty Feuds might be baniſhed, and be no more! O

how

how amiable then would Christianity be! how would a habit of *love* become *truth*! if *peace* and *truth* went hand in hand, then no respect of persons would appear, then superiors, equals, and inferiors, would be all loved, one should not be envied because he is above us either in temporals or spirituals; and another should not be disesteemed, because he is *below* us; but that place where God hath set us should content us. Is it so hard a thing to be perswaded to comply with so sweet and lovely a vertue as this is? shall not pride, and whisperings, and self-will, tale-bearing, flattering, and all causes of contention be parted with? but alas! how many are so in love with them, that true love can't enter; if the Lord should *seek advantages* against his poor Creatures, as they do *one against another*, where would they appear? but he is *God and not man*, and will not *break the bruised reed*, for he is *love*, and he that *dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and he in him*, 1 Joh. 4. 16.

We see also here in the Text, how zealously affectionate this most *loving*, and *beloved* Disciple of our Lord is towards the Saints; how *earnestly* he wishes the prosperity of *Gaius*, and what *rejoycing notice* he takes of his growth in Grace, and the thriving of his Soul: whence we shall observe this:

Doct. *That a Soul-prospering state is a desirable and commendable state.*

We read that when our Lord Jesus sent from Heaven to the Churches of *Asia*, he finds occasion to blame some of them; there are found also some that are commended; *thou art rich*, a thriving people; the Lord sends them a double Promise: First, a Crown of life. Secondly, security not to be hurt of the second death, *Rev.* 2. 9. The Apostle commends the *Thessalonians* for their spiritual prosperity, saying, *your faith groweth exceedingly, and your charity towards one another aboundeth*, 2 Thes. 1. 3. they did so thrive, that he with much confidence saith, that God *had chosen them to salvation from the beginning*, 2 Thes. 2. 13. Of which let us make these improvements.

Use 1. Since we read that some have had *lean souls*, as Psal. 106. 15. it is very useful to consider by way of *Examination* how our souls do? whether they *thrive*, or not? Most men will cast up their accounts concerning their outward state, to know how it is with them in increase or decay; and every wise man if he find that he *decays*, will endeavour some other course in his trade, or abate in his expences, and not go on without taking any account until he is utterly undone: so every one that doth exercise *true wisdom*, will count often with his soul to know its spiritual condition, lest he be undone for ever before he be aware; therefore to help us in this work, I shall propound something to be considered as signs of ul-decays.

1 *Sign.*

1. *Sign.* We may Compare our *ſpiritual ſtate* with our *bodies in health or ſickneſs*, to bring it the nearer to our experiences. It is a ſign of a preſent or future decay of ſtrength and health, when the appetite to food is decayed or loſt; *Job* 33. 20. ſo is it with us in *ſpirituals*. Chriſt ſaith it is a bleſſed ſtate to be *hungring and thirſting after righteouſneſs*, Matt. 5. 6. but when a ſoul is not *longing* after the word of life by which *man ſhould live and not by bread alone*, Matt. 4. 4. when it doth not thirſt after God like the *Hart after the water-brooks*, it is a ſign of decay; and when it comes to *loath its ſpiritual food*, then it is ſick indeed near death, *Mic.* 2. 6. then night ſhall be upon you, and it ſhall be dark unto you; when men will neglect *hearing* and other *duties* upon ſmall accounts; it may be it is ſome *miles* to go, or ſome *rain* falls, or it is too hot or too cold, or the *Preacher* is as *Micah* was to *Ahab* out of their *affections*, he tells them of their ſins, and threatens *Judgments*, and *propheſies no good to them*; or if they take a *book* into their hands to read, are ſo little affected with, and the mind ſo little exercis'd in the things they read, that ſleep is ready to ſhut their eyes, or dull their ſenſes, ſo that it becomes unprofitable: all theſe are very ſad ſigns of an *unhealththy* ſoul, and a *decaying* Chriſtian.

2. *Sign.* When people are *weary without cauſe*,

this the Physicians say foreshewth diseases of the body; so is it when people are called into the Lords Vineyard, and have set their hand to work in the works of God, and grow weary and dull, and need *precept upon precept, and line upon line,* and yet go on heavily like men *tired out,* when there is *no cause*; for the Lord, nor his Gospel give them no cause; there is so much sweet refreshment in a Gospel-life that nothing under Heaven is to be compared with it, *Mic.* 6. 3. 1 *Pet.* 1. 8.

3. *Sign.* As in the natural body when corruption and superabounding *humors* are not *purged out,* it produceth distempers; so it is with our *inward* man: if the corruptions of *flesh and spirit* be not purged out but remain, this will make that soul *sick,* Isa. 1. 5. the *whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint:* why so? because there were *bruises, wounds, and putrifying sores.* The way to thrive is to keep the heart *clean*; and if any ill humors do begin to arise, then go to the *great Physician* and intreat a portion of his Grace to *purge* and purifie thy heart; and when thou hast obtained it, then improve it with thy *whole might,* and let not thine eye, nor thy hand, nor thy heart spare it, as *Saul* did the *spoil of Amaleck*; for if thou do, it will make thy soul *lean,* and *sick,* and die; and remove *mercy,* as it did from *Saul*; for God hated *Amalek* because they were *sinners*; and sin whersoever it

it is ſuffered, will *deſtroy*; therefore purg out the *old leaven*, 1 Cor. 5 7.

Uſe 2. Hence be exhorted to *endeavour this ſoul proſperity*; it is commendable, and it is commanded, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 7. 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. Can you thrive in better riches than the riches of Grace, or in any that will bring you greater advantage and *returns* of profit? the Merchant will venture his eſtate into a far countrey in hope of a return with gain, who loſeth ſometimes his expectation; and will not men venture on this proſperous work that hath the Eternal God for a *helper* to manage theſe ſoul-affairs, that miſcarry not by enemy, nor by tempeſt; and the return is ſo ſure, and profits ſo laſting, that it outvalueth the choiceſt *Pearls* of the Eaſtern world, and out-laſteth the Sun and Moon, and will be an enduring ſubſtance when the Earth ſhall fall and riſe no more, *Iſa.* 24. 20. yea when Heaven and Earth ſhall have no place found for them, *Rev.* 20 11. yet then ſhall a ſoul *thriving Saint* have a rich and glorious place in the *fulneſs of joy*, their names being found in the Lambs *book of life*, written among the living in *Jeruſalem*, for the elect of God, choſen in Chriſt from the *foundations of the world* to be *heirs with Chriſt* of the *city of God*, whoſe name ſhall be written upon them, *Rev.* 3. 12. Now that we may *grow up* in this ſpiritual ſtate, to increaſe and proſper in every good thing, *faith*, and

love, *zeal* and *godlineſs*, and be fitted to ſerve the Lord acceptably, and come to full *aſſurance* of his love to our ſouls, and may have joy in believing, *rejoycing with joy unſpeakable and full of Glory*; I ſhall preſent unto you ſome few directions tending to a proſpering ſtate.

1. *Direct.* If we would flouriſh in Chriſtianity, we muſt *lay aſide every weight*, Heb. 12. 1. *Firſt*, *Worldly mindedneſs* is a weight that keeps down the ſoul, and uncompoſes the mind, and keeps out the means of increaſings, and becomes a great hinderance to our beſt work: and yet it may be, that thoſe things that the mind is ſet upon, may be *lawful* in themſelves; all they that made *excuſe* in the Goſpel, were minding and promoting *lawful* things; hiring *farms*, buying Oxen, marrying Wives are not unlawful, and yet theſe were ſuch hindrances and ſuch weights on their feet, that they could not come to Chriſt, concerning whom it was determined that they ſhould not taſt of that which they were *invited to*, which was *life eternal*: they had their *outward things* ſo in their eye, that they were not willing to let them ſtand by while they went to receive *a goſpel* and *a kingdom*, Luke 14. 18. and how often is it ſeen ſadly by experience, that *ſuch an excuſe* ſhall ſerve to excuſe them from the *Lords ſervice*, which will not excuſe from temporal buſineſs? do not we hear per-

perſons excuſe themſelves from going to publick duties where Gods preſence is promiſed, upon *weakneſs of body*, tediouſneſs of *weather*, farneſs of journey; and yet on the *week*-days will go farther in worſe weather with thoſe very bodies, to a *Market*, or after ſome worldly affairs. Now do you think, friends, that the Lord takes no notice of your deceitful dealing with him? take heed of it, I have met with too much of it in the days of my Pilgrimage, and many a ſorrowful thought I have had upon the conſideration of it, and I am afraid that I ſhall hear of it again charged upon ſome at the *day of the Lord*: I deſire them who are concerned herein, to *repent* that theſe ſins may be blotted out; and I deſire all that profeſs the fear of God, to take heed that they be not overcome with the *incumbrances* of this world; remember that ſaying, *the time is ſhort*; *it remains that in uſing the world it muſt not be abuſed*, *for the faſhion of it paſſeth away*, 1 Cor. 7. 29. the world is *abuſed* when it becomes a *ſnare* to our ſouls, when our *minds* are ſo much on it, that our *prayers* and other duties ſavour of the earth, the mind running out and not kept cloſe with God; when men find not ſufficient time to examine their hearts, and compoſe their ſpirits, to converſe with God; this makes them ſuch ſtrangers in heaven, ſo much unacquainted with the Lord and his ways, that when he ſhews them the *great things of his law*,

it ſeems to them *as a ſtrange thing*, Hoſea 8. 12. Many will talk you readily of their *inheritance* in the world, and their title to it, and how much they can give *each child* to its *Portion*; but queſtion with them about the great and weighty matter of their *Soul*, they can ſay but little concerning *a treaſure in Heaven*, nor what aſſurances they have for *life*; which ſhows that their minds are moſt on things below.

2. Another *weight* that hinders Religion from growing up in us, is *worldly luſts*, from which the Apoſtle *Peter* beſeecheth Chriſtians *to abſtain*, for this reaſon, becauſe *they war againſt the ſoul*, 1 Pet. 2. 11. which is one thing that *John* ſaith is *of the world*, 1 John 2. 16. and which *Paul* ſaith, *drowns men in deſtruction and perdition*, 1 Tim. 6. therefore let all that *name the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity*, putting off the works of darkneſs, walking honeſtly as in the day, *not in chambering and wantonneſs, but puting on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make no proviſion for the fleſh to fulfill it in the luſt thereof*, Rom. 13. 13. for the end of thoſe things is *death*; and all the *pleaſures* of ſin have a *ſting* in them, that makes them bitterneſs in the latter end: might not one reaſon with our generation (which are many of them lovers of *pleaſures* more than lovers of God) what fruit they expect from all their ſinful induſtry? doth not the word of truth ſay, that *if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die*,

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Rom. 8. 13. and the Lord tells us, that those that be overcome with *surfeiting and drunkenness, that day shall overtake them at unawares:* and yet can men think to live as they list, and take their pleasures as if only they had a *License* to sin, and *prohibition* from all Christian obediences? as if they had found a more *flesh-pleasing* way to life than ever *Gods Word* revealed, or any holy men ever found? as if they had made a *covenant with death, and with hell were at an agreement?* Isa. 28. 15. nay verily, it shall not stand; *for a fire not blown shall consume them*, and in the midst of their *sufficiency they shall be in straits*, Job 20. 26.

2. *Direct.* If we would prosper, we must *be diligent*: we often hear the *thrifty worldling* say, that one way to be rich, is to be diligent; yea *Solomon* was of that perswasion, *Prov.* 10. 4. and it is so in spiritual things; a diligent man or woman is the only thriving Christian; that is the person that is like to be *rich in good works*, rich in *Faith*, and to be like the tree planted by the waters, that brings forth his fruit in season; he that gives all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that is diligent in observing Gods Will, diligent in performing the same, diligent both in publick and private duties.

3. *Direct.* We must in a holy and circumspect manner *set time a part* for the service of God, which tends much to the prosperity of the soul,

and

and becauſe this is too much neglected by many, I ſhall ſpeak the more to it. And *Firſt*, All Chriſtians agree that ſome conſtant time ought to be obſerved for *publick worſhip*, which in the Old Teſtament was the *ſeventh day Sabbath*, and ſome obſerve it ſtill; others keep the *firſt day* out of conſcience, others are *Conſcienceleſs* in keeping *any*; but ſuch *ſeldom proſper* in their ſouls whilſt they make uſe of that opinion; for my own part I have and do plead for a *religious obſervation of the Lords day, or firſt day of the week* under the diſpenſation of the new Covenant, both becauſe the ſame ſeemed to be pointed at or *ſhadowed* forth even in the Law, *Lev.* 23. 15. where they are to reckon from the *morrow after the Sabbath*; and accordingly Chriſt commands his diſciples to *wait* at *Jeruſalem* till they were endued with *power*, which they received (by being filled with the Holy Spirit) on *this day of the week*, on which alſo our Lord *aroſe*; As alſo becauſe it was *practiſed* by the Apoſtles, whoſe practice was therein ſo far *owned* by the Lord, that he came to them ſeveral times *upon it*, John 20. 19, and 26. and St. *John* Rev. 1. 10. calls it *the Lords day*, as more peculiarly appropriated then to Gods worſhip, than *any* other; and indeed thoſe many *precedents* of Gods *wrath* which are and have been manifeſt throughout generations, might put a *dread* upon thoſe that either in *principle* or *practice* diſown its obſervation, if they would

would *hear the rod, and who hath appointed it*, Micah 6. 9. As on the other hand, the *bleſſing* that attends its obſervance is enough to recommend it to every pious ſoul; for the moſt zealous and religious obſervers of it have been moſt bleſſed with *ſoul mercies*, and if you will not believe me in this, yet believe your own *experiences*, and ſee who thrives beſt in Religion, he that when the Lords day approacheth doth lay aſide his temporals, and examines concerning the *week paſt*, and humbles himſelf, renews his reſolutions, and ſeeks the Lord *by prayer* to fit him for his ſervice, and then riſeth *early* in the morning as *Abraham* did, and ſpends his time in *reading*, *prayer*, and *meditation* on the word, and ſo goeth warm in his ſoul to Gods *publick worſhip*; or *he* that will work *late* on the *ſeventh day* becauſe he remembers that he can take his *eaſe* next morning, and ſo *ſteal* ſome time from the Lord; and then having *long ſlept*, he muſt ſee after his cattle or ſome other by-buſineſs, go to a neighbours houſe to talk or make a bargain, or ſome other buſineſs of the world, and ſo come little more prepared for the Lords preſence, than the veryeſt carnal men there; therefore let every honeſt ſoul conſider and *try* by experience which of theſe is the growing Chriſtian, and they ſhall find that a *bleſſing* hath attended them that did in a *holy and religious* manner ſpend the Lords day; and that *coldneſs* and *carnality* hath

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accompanied them that were careleſs of its due obſervation, and would make that time ſerve to do all by-buſineſs in that the Law does not puniſh them for. Then let this perſwade *all that fear God* to riſe early, and be with the Lord by *Prayer* to prepare thy heart to do him ſervice in an acceptable manner, and pray that God would bleſs his people with his preſence, that his *word* may be with power among them; *Paul* deſires the *Saints* to pray for him, much more need is there in this weak Age to be earneſt with God that his Word may be preached with his Power; and if *neceſſity* keep thee from the *Congregation* of Gods People, be ſure do not *ſleep* away thy time, nor ſpend it *talking* about worldly matters, but in *family* or private duty, that when evening comes thou maieſt be able to anſwer a good conſcience towards God for that day; and know for certain, that if thou ſhalt preſume to *work* as ſome do, it will not enrich thee in *this world*; God doth alwaies blaſt it; I never knew in that time that I have lived, and known ſomething of Gods will, but thoſe that thought to benefit themſelves thereby, have *decayed* in their eſtate *outwardly* as well as *inwardly*, and no other known cauſe for it: and I have known ſeveral of ſuch that have died *very poor*; for though this duty be not ſo contended for by many who would be called Chriſtians, as ſome other things of leſs concernment that are made *foundations in religion*; yet a

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neglecting time to ſerve God in, muſt needs overthrow the *publick ſervice* of God, and unfit for private; and bring in a *bondage* with the *Goſpel* on all *ſervants*, and ſuch as are under the command of others, and upon the *poor tired beaſts*, which the Law *freed* them from, ſo that they ſhall have *no reſt* but at the mercy of mercyleſs men.

4. *Direct.* If we would *proſper* in our ſouls, we muſt *be frequent in private Prayer*; as there muſt be time allowed for duty, ſo there muſt be ſeriouſneſs and compoſure of heart, and in an awful and prepared frame to pour out the heart to God; Go into thy cloſet, ſaith Chriſt: will you not go at his bidding, who ſaith, *ſeek and ye ſhall find?* Dear friends, if I do not prevail with you in *this*, I ſhall miſs in prevailing with you in many *other* things; for in whomſoever this is neglected, no vertue will *ripen*; be often therefore in it, *pray conſtantly*, let not *ſtrength* and *warmth* decay by long *intervals* of time between duty and duty; but when thou haſt provided a *ſecret* place and ſutable time, and haſt mourned and meditated thine *heart* into a praying frame, then carry *Faith* to Heaven with thy Prayers, whereby thou mayeſt apprehend God reconciled in Jeſus Chriſt unto thee; that thou mayeſt have a *ſenſible communion* with him in Chriſt, and obtain a *lively feeling* of his preſence, the light of his countenance, *Pſal.* 4.

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And if any poor ſoul ſhall ſay, but I am ſo *weak* in that work that I want *expreſſions*, to take with me words and go to the Lord. I anſwer, haſt thou a *deſire* ſoul? doſt thou long, and ſigh, and *mourn* for inlarged abilities? then remember that *every good and perfect gift comes down from above*, Jam. 1. 17. humble thy ſelf, and go to God, and humbly tell him that his word ſaith, that he will *prepare the heart*, Pſal. 10. 17. intreat him to prepare thy heart, and to help thy infirmity, and put words into thy mouth, and take the beſt words thou art furniſhed with, and go to the Lord *often*, and though thou haſt not many *large expreſſions*, yet know that *ſighs and groans are not hid from God*, Pſal 38. 9. but are from the movings of his Spirit, *Rom.* 8. 26. and if thou art young, let not thy young years be ſpent without *calling upon God*; for if thou wilt ſeek unto him *betimes*, and make thy ſupplication unto the Almighty; if thou art pure and upright, ſurely now he would *awake* for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteouſneſs *proſperous*; though *thy beginning be but ſmall yet thy latter end ſhall greatly increaſe*, Job. 8. 5, 6, 7. whence we may learn, that to *pray* is the means to *proſper*, and that there may be ſmall beginnings, and yet if pure and upright, their *end* will be filled with *increaſe*; acquaint then *thy ſelf with him and be at peace, ſo good ſhall come unto thee*, Job 22. 21. it may be thou may-

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eſt have no other time allotted thee but thy youth; middle age and old age may be denied thee; the *grave* takes at all ages; therefore know God, and *ſerve* him with a perfect heart; and then a *ſhort life* may be to thee a *priviledg*; if thou live *long*, thou wilt have no cauſe of *ſorrow* for thy early ſerving God; art thou *old*? and haſt thou neglected this great duty of *private Prayer* (that ſweet and precious *priviledg* admitted us to converſe with God)? then be intreated yet at *laſt* not to die in neglect of duty; were there ever any in any age that were not a *praying people*, owned of God for his People? when was the time? and who were the people that are recorded *for life* without this? not to call upon God is the *badg* of ſinners, *Pſal.* 14. 4. think not that God hath required no more of thee but to pray *by others mouths*, and others *forms*; thou muſt pray with *the Spirit*, and with *underſtanding* alſo, 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. and if the Lord doth not anſwer in thy time and thy way, complain not, God hath a more *fit* time and a *better* way to anſwer in, than thou knoweſt of; reſign to him, and he will bring it to paſs; it may be thou prayeſt for *health*, *wealth*, or long life, and the Lord may know that if thou hadſt them, they might be thy *ruine*, and tend to thy eternal loſs, and the Lord in love *denies* thee, as we deny our child a *knife* though it cry for it, becauſe it ſhould not *hurt* it ſelf; but we give it an apple

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in the ſtead of it; If the Lord give *better* things, be content: *Moſes* ſometimes could prevail with God for *Iſrael*, but when he had determined that he muſt *die*, his prayer in that is not anſwered, *Deut.* 3. 26. when *Elijah* made requeſt to the Lord that he might *die*, the Lord provides another thing for him, even to be carried to Heaven in a *chariot of fire*, 1 *Kings* 19. 4. and 2 *Kings* 2. 11. when *Paul* deſired that the *thorn in the fleſh* might depart from him, the Lord anſwers that his *grace was ſufficient* for him, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. the Lord will give returns of Prayer according to his *Will* and our *good*, only let us live *the life of our Prayers*, not to pray for one thing and practiſe another, and ſo contradict our requeſts, then the Lord may juſtly deny us; if we pray *againſt ſin*, and yet voluntarily commit it, pray for *Grace*, and yet *neglect* the means to obtain it; take heed of this, it will *ſpoil* your returns of Prayer, and bring a *blaſting* on you.

5. *Direct.* If we would thrive in our ſouls, we muſt keep *union* and cloſe *ſociety with thriving men*; the children of God muſt be our indeared companions, and be incouraged, *Pſal.* 66. 16. the *ſaints* and the *excellent*, in them muſt be our *delight*, Pſal. 16. 3. to keep in the ſociety of the godly is beneficial; and if a ſoul eſtrange from, or loath the godly, decays will ſuddenly follow; but we muſt take heed of *undue commerce* with carnal men; there is ſome *company* that is of neceſſity

ceſſity to our preſent being; but to company with them when neceſſity doth not inforce, is diſadvantageous to our inward man; it brings damps upon the ſpirit, and puts out that good frame perſons ſhould be found in; for experience tells us that when we are neceſſitated to be with thoſe whoſe talk hath been about vain things, idle communication mixed with Oaths; we ſhall always go away impaired, or at leaſt there will be an aptneſs to have a ſounding of that unſavoury eccho in our minds to the diſquieting of the ſoul; our time being uncertain, we would not that *death* ſhould find us among them in ſuch diſcourſes, ſpending precious time in ſuch a manner, where we neither *do good* nor *receive good*; but where the meditations are diſordered, our words unprofitable and religion ſcandalized; therefore the Lords Counſel is, *Touch no unclean thing, and keep your ſelves unſpotted from the world*, Jam. 1. 27. and *ſave your ſelves from this untoward generation*, Acts 2. 40. There is much danger in the *flatteries* of men, many times more than in their perſecutions; *therefore if ſinners intice thee, conſent thou not*, Prov. 1. It's better to anger men than commit ſin; time miſpent returns no more, therefore the way to redeem it, is to be well improving of it; that being where ſomething of God and his ways, our duties and hope to promiſes is ſpoken of, we may be gaining advanta-

ges for our ſouls, and increaſing the proſperity of our inward man; and let all families be helpful one to another like Chriſtians, as inſtruments of good, that they may not have cauſe to complain of each other, as *Adam* of his Wife, that their mutual ſociety has been occaſion of their mutual ſin; for it is ſad that thoſe that ſhould be moſt helpful, ſhould prove impediments to eternal life.

There are divers conſiderations that preſs us thereunto. As,

Motive 1. We ſhould endeavour to increaſe and get ſtrength, and proſper in our ſpirits, that *we may be the better able to ſtand in tryals*; being built upon a Rock: a weak ſickly man cannot ſo well weather out a ſtorm, therefore the Apoſtle exhorts, *be ſtrong in the Lord*, Epheſ. 6. 10. and to *lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees*; *leſt that which is lame be turned out of the way*, Heb. 12. 12. No one knows what tryals the Lord will exerciſe him with; you may meet with ſtraits wherein a little Faith and a little Patience will no: ſerve your turn; then you will wiſh you had got more ſtrength, and proſpered better when you had opportunities: for growing Saints are thoſe that will be beſt inabled to look fiery tryals in the face with boldneſs.

Motive 2. A growing thriving ſtate in our Chriſtian race, *will encourage and rejoyce our Goſpel-*

pel-Companions, *John* in the next verſe ſaith, *I rejoyced greatly when the brethren came and teſtified of the truth that is in thee*; and *verſe* 4. *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth*: they that labour in the word are exceedingly comforted when there appears ſuch fruit of their pains. Will not this move you, O friends! to preſs forwards in godlineſs and holineſs, when it makes muſick in Heaven, and joy amongſt the Saints? as on the contrary, your ſloth and declinings grieve the holy Angels and all good men, and only give occaſion of triumph to your mortal enemies, the Devil and wicked people; 'tis the property of ſinners to rejoice when others do evil like themſelves, and ſo much the more if they can draw in ſuch as make a profeſſion of Religion; which ſhows who rules in them, even the tempter who inticeth to ſin; the drunkard rejoiceth to ſee his companion whom he pretends to love, drunk before him; but as in all other things, ſo here there is a quite contrary diſpoſition between the ſervants of God and the ſervants of ſin, they rejoice when a godly man ſins, *Pſal.* 88. 16. but the godly man mourns when they ſin, *Pſal.* 119. 136. they are not willing that he ſhould continue righteous and be ſaved, he is not willing they ſhould continue ſinners and be damned; the good man ſpends his ſtrength, his eſtate, and ſometimes his life that they may

be everlastingly happy, and they for that very work of his, hate and persecute him; from which different frame of spirit 'tis easily discerned who are of God and who are not, for *it is the joy of the just to do judgment*, Prov. 21. 15.

Lastly, A soul-prospering state will make rich for ever; tis only he that is laying up immortal Treasures, as Christ commands, *Matt.* 6. 20. When worldly men are heaping up perishing bags, full-cram'd with precious durt, and joyning field to field, they judg themselves thriving men, and are ready to say, *soul take thine ease*; but when a Christian adds Vertue to Vertue, and Grace to Grace, and becomes rich in Faith, and abounding in good works, this is the man that thrives indeed, and who hath got a title to a durable inheritance; and though his neighbours count him poor, yet God and Christ, Angels and Saints know him to be rich, even a co-heir with Christ the Lord of all things; 'tis true he may save but little here whilst he is under age, and not come to years to enjoy the possession; but when the time appointed by his Father shall come, when his minority of mortality shall be out-grown, and he delivered from the bondage of corruption, and restored into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, then will he be instated in incorruptible Riches and endless Honour; this seems

a paradox, but is an infallible truth; it would indeed be incredible news to inform a great noble and rich worldling, that ſuch a poor man in a Cottage were richer than he, his eſtate better, and his wealth more durable; he would preſently think he had ſome ſecret-pot of Gold, or had found ſome buried bags; but if you tell him 'tis an eſtate in Heaven, a reverſion in another world; the Muckworm laughs you to ſcorn, being of that *French* Atheiſt's mind, who ſaid *he would not leave his part in* Paris *for a ſhare in* Paradiſe: but the godly man will not part with his right that he hath through Chriſt in the life to come, for all the world; the Eaſtern Spices and the Weſtern Mines, are but trifles; the Gold of *Ophir* and all the Silver of *Peru*, but droſs in compariſon of it. Let carnal hearts hug their fleeting Riches whilſt they will; he looks on all ſublunary treaſures as little better than nothing, nay oft-times worſe than nothing; but knows that thoſe that have an intereſt in Chriſt, muſt needs be the richeſt men in the world, becauſe their Riches will outlaſt the world; and who would not think himſelf happy in ſuch a *purchaſe*?

SERMON VI.

Phil. 2. 8.

And being found in the fashion of a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

WELL may the Apostle say, *Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh*; the Prophets searched after this great promise of the Messiah that tended to mans salvation, and the *Angels desire to look into it*, 1 Pet. 1. 12. For truly it is that wonderful work of God, and such infinite love appears in it, as may astonish the whole Creation; that the eternal God by whose word the Heavens and the Earth were made and are upheld, that he whose Majesty was offended, and his just Law broken, should in his infinite Wisdom find out a way to bring lost man into his favour by his *beloved and only* Son, who thought it no robbery to be equal with God; to give him to die so shameful and bitter a death

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as the death of the Croſs: and all this boundleſs love and unſpeakable goodneſs ſhewed to poor creatures not only as ſuch, but when they were *ſinners* and enemies againſt him, *Rom.* 5. 10. for though then both *Jew* and *Gentiles* were very wicked, inſomuch that Chriſt calls them, a *ſinful and adulterous generation*, whoſe malice increaſed, and combin'd together to kill *the Lord of life*; yet the Lord having made a gracious promiſe to ſend a Prophet greater than *Moſes* to be a Saviour of his People, doth make it good, and none ſhall let it.

1. Chriſt humbled himſelf to become *man*: this was great humility, that he *without whom was nothing made that was made*, John 1. 3. that had *glory with the Father before the worlds were made*, John 17. 5. that he ſhould be made like his brethren, that *foraſmuch as the children were partakers of fleſh and blood, he himſelf took part of the ſame*, Heb. 2. 14. and ſo was made of the *ſeed of David according to the fleſh*, Rom. 1. 13. This was ſuch a wonderful condeſcention as who would have *asked*, had not the Lord *proffered* it freely, that poor mortal men ſhould have a Prophet raiſed *from among their brethren*, Deut. 18. Would it not be a great humiliation for a *Prince* to lay aſide his Robes and all his glory to come to a poor creature in a *Cottage*, put on his mean garments, and dwell with him there until he had provided for him garments of Ho-

your fit for his Princely Palace, and then conduct him thither, and place him there with himself in Honour; how much more was it for our bleſſed Lord to deſcend from Infinite Glory and Excellent Majeſty, and take upon him the form of a ſervant! this is unſpeakable Humility!

2. Chriſt put himſelf *under the Law* to fulfil it, *Gal.* 4. 4. ſo that he *kept* that Law that man had *broken*, and was become a tranſgreſſor of, and liable to wrath; for *Adam* brought us to the *grave*, and actual ſin which is the tranſgreſſion of a righteous Law, which to fall'n man was become an adminiſtration of death, 2 *Cor.* 3. 7. therefore wanted a Redeemer to redeem from the tranſgreſſions of the firſt *Covenant*, Heb. 9. 15. that ſo a *Covenant of life* might take place in which was no death, for God ſent not his Son *into the world to condemn the world*, but to ſave it, John 3. 17.

3. He humbled himſelf to a *poor mean and low condition in the world*: he did not come as a *Prince* or great one of the earth, but born in a mean Inn, and laid in a *Manger*, brought up with a *Carpenter*; though *Foxes had holes, and birds of the air neſts, the ſon of man had not where to lay his head*, Mat. 8. 20. when they came for *tribute* he is ſupplied by a *fiſh*, Mat. 17. he was a *man of ſorrow and acquainted with grief*, Iſa. 53. a *reproach of men and deſpiſed of the people*, Pſal. 22. 6. he *hid not his face from ſhame and ſpitting*,

ting, Isa. 50. 6. Thus, and abundantly more did the Lord humble himself in his life, being low in the sight of the world.

4. He humbled himself to *death*, even the death of the *Cross*; it was exceeding much that he should give himself to die; and more, to die so *painful* a death as to have his hands and feet *nailed*, his bones wrackt out of joint, that all his bones might be told, *Psalm* 22. 14, 17. and a sword pierced through his soul, *Luke* 2. 35. Who can but consider the bitterness of such a Cup?

And all this, and whatsoever more did make up a Cup of deep sufferings, he underwent

1. *Willingly:* when Offerings and Sacrifices would not do what man wanted, he saith, *Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God,* Psal. 40. 7. he seeing the travel of his soul, was satisfied.

2. *Obediently:* as *Isaiah* propheſied saying, *The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.* Isa. 50. 5.

3. *Meekly:* who *when he was reviled, he reviled not again: when he suffered, he threatned not: but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously,* 1 Pet. 2. 13. but *as a sheep before the sheerers, so opened he not his mouth.* Nor were the sufferings of Christ on a slender account, but upon most weighty grounds, and to accomplish wonderful Priviledges. As, 1. That

1. That the *Scriptures might be fulfiled*, for all things must be *fulfilled which are written in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms: and thus it is written: and thus it behoveth Christ to have suffered*, Luke 24. 46. when Christ tells *Peter* that he could pray the *Father and he should presently give him more than twelve legions of Angels*, he adds, but *how then shall the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be? Mat.* 26. 54. God confirming the words of his Servants, *Isa.* 44. 26.

2. The sufferings of Christ did *compleat and give the substance of many types and shadows in the Law*, as the lifting up *the Serpent* in the wilderness, *John* 3. 14. and also those many *Sacrifices* which could not make the comers thereunto perfect: *But Christ being come an high Priest of good things to come, by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*, Heb. 9. 11. 12. Those types, and shadows, and divers ordinances were imposed until the time of restoration, which was until the great Prophet came and did declare a *new and better covenant*, established upon *better promises*.

3. The Lord in his sufferings *brought the New Testament to be of force:* for where a Testament is, there must of necessity be the *death of the Testator*, Heb. 9. 16, 17. for the glad tidings of remission of sins could not be Preached without it, for without *shedding of blood there is no remission*,

on, Heb. 9. 22. therefore when Chriſt was riſen, then he commanded them to go into all the world and Preach the Goſpel to every creature, *Mark* 16. 15. the Teſtament being now confirmed by the blood of Jeſus.

4. The *ſufferings of Chriſt anſwered what Juſtice required*, that God might be juſt, and the Juſtifier of them that believe in Jeſus, *Rom.* 3. 26. that God might be juſt, and yet repenting believing ſinners ſaved; this was wonderful wiſdom that *Juſtice* ſhould have what was required, and *Mercy* ſhould have what it deſired; the Son to ſtand in the breach made by ſin, and ſinners received into the arms of everlaſting Love; a *ſpotleſs one* bearing ſin, and polluted ſinners receiving righteouſneſs, and yet *Juſtice* pure and ſpotleſs for evermore.

5. Chriſt through death *deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is the Devil*, *Heb.* 2. 14. *having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them on the Croſs*, Col. 2. 15.

6. Chriſt ſuffered that ſin *might not be imputed*, upon their being reconciled to God through him: *for God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their ſins*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. *Chriſt bare our ſins in his own body on the tree*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. that Believers might not be preſs'd down under wrath for ever.

The *uſes* we are to make from the conſideration

on of this wonderful Humiliation of Christ, are these.

Use 1. This doth inform us of the *unspeakable love of Christ to poor sinners. Paul* takes this to his own person as well as to other Saints, *Gal.* 2. 20. *The Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me.* This love is a love that passeth understanding, such infinite love as to give *himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour*, Ephes. 5. 2. This love was confirmed to us by shedding his *precious blood.* The time of our want and misery *was a time of love*, *Ezek.* 16. 8. O this is the eternal and ever-during love that never fails! Mans love sometimes holds to their friends in their prosperity; but when that fleeth away, many times their love goeth with it; and when affliction comes, then come *frowns* and *slightings*, censurings and judgings; then *Job*'s friends became *miserable comforters*, every hand hath a stone to fling, every mote is made a beam; but God dealt not so with us in our distress, he despised not the affliction of the afflicted, *Psal.* 22. 24. *Yea, in all their affliction* he is said *to be afflicted*, Isa. 63. 9. So that the love of God and Christ was not of that *perishing nature*, that *mans* is apt to be. A woman may forget her *sucking child*, but *God will not forget his people*, Isa. 49. 15. Mans love is mixed with too much self, pride and evil surmisings, some-

ſometimes ſuppoſing that others do not reſpect them; and upon that ſuppoſition their love is reſtrained; and others do not ſee and believe the ſame things we do in matters of Religion; and then in many, love is quenched and withdrawn; though there be no reaſon for it, that men ſhould love them the leſs, becauſe they dare not do any thing againſt *conſcience*, nor doubting; but would have *faith* in all they do, that the Lord requires it to be done. And when love is thus broken upon the rock of diviſion, then comes forth cenſuring; *Job*'s diſtreſs ſhall prove him a hypocrite, becauſe God had ſmitten him; and every affliction ſhall ſpeak them greater ſinners than others. But Chriſt did not deal ſo with us, when we were in diſtreſs, and could not help our ſelves; we were in dark errors, and great wickedneſs, and yet the Lord loved us. If he had not, where had we been leſs than in eternal darkneſs? But here was love to us, when nothing was in us but ſin, and with us but *miſery*. We may admire and ſay, *Behold what manner of love he hath beſtowed on us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God!* We may reflect with ſorrow upon our own *hearts*, that there is ſo little love to God dwelling in us, who hath loved us with ſo great love. For if there were not too much emptineſs of this duty, there would be more *holineſs*, more *zeal*, and *heedful walking*, than appears among moſt. There would be love to ſuch as fear God,

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and walk uprightly, a paſſing by *ignorances*, and bearing one anothers *burdens*; and ſo fulfil the Law of Chriſt, *Gal.* 6. 2. there would be a ſtriving after the *power of godlineſs* as well as the *form*. O let love be ſhewn in deeds and performances, and not in *words* and complements. Chriſts love was ſuch, as he did not ſtay in Heaven and pity the creature, and *wiſh* them well, that they had a deliverer; but he came *down* to redeem them from calamity, and to bring them to himſelf, and give them glory. Be intreated then to *love the Lord all ye his Saints*, Pſal. 31. 23. And this Commandment have we from him, *That he who loveth God, love his brother alſo*, 1 Joh. 4. 21.

Uſe 2. This informs us, *That God is very ſevere againſt ſin*. For when his beloved Son that knew no ſin, was made ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him; when he was bruiſed and wounded; and though he prayed, that if poſſible that cup might paſs from him, yet it paſſed not, but he drunk it ſo as to make a perfect atonement. Since God was ſo ſevere againſt our ſin, that he ſpared it not on his own Son: O juſt and holy Majeſty! who would be ſo deſperately bold as *to ſin willingly* againſt ſo ſevere a God, if they knew what they did? *Paul* bids the Gentiles *behold the ſeverity of God againſt ſin in his own people*, as they were reputed, and were really until ſin broke them off, *Rom.* 11. 22. ſo

22. ſo we may ſay, Behold! the ſeverity of God againſt ſin in the ſufferings of his Son, that bleſſed one, who had no ſin, yet it pleaſed the Father to bruiſe him, and put him to grief. Behold it, I ſay, and tremble all you that *make a mock at ſin*, and ſeriouſly conſider the next uſe: which is,

Uſe 3. That it is a *dreadful condition to be without a right and intereſt in the ſufferings of Chriſt*: For if God were ſo ſevere againſt ſin, that he did not ſpare his own Son, though he cried to him, *that if it were poſſible that cup might paſs from him*, then he will ſurely be ſevere againſt ſinners which have no part in that Sacrifice, no juſtification nor *pardon* of ſin by that blood which was ſhed, *Joh.* 3. 16. Unto ſuch may that Scripture ſo full of terrour be applied, *Deut.* 29. 20. *The Lord will not ſpare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealouſie ſhall ſmoke againſt that man, and all the curſes that are written in this book ſhall lie upon him.* So *Ezek.* 8. 18. *Therefore I will deal in fury, mine eyes ſhall not ſpare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry unto me with a loud voice, yet I will not hear them. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, Heb. 10. 31. Theſe and many other Scriptures ſpeak to this purpoſe, and ſome there are on whom they will be accompliſhed, to their *wo and ſorrow* for ever; and that *on many* too, if *broad be the way and wide the gate that leadeth to deſtruction, and many go in there*

thereat. O then consider whether thou art not *one* of that *many*, which canst not prove thy self to have an *interest* in Christ, and priviledged by his sufferings, and so art one of them that lye under these *Threatnings*; consider, that if it should prove so hereafter, though thou do not now think any such thing; would it not be terrible? If thou shouldest awake fitted for eternal flames, wilt not thou then cry out, Oh where am I now! in what a case am I awaken'd! What! amidst the throng of sinners, where there is trembling and horrour, and dismal calamity, such as never was! O that I had known my state better before this day! and had been perswaded by Gods word to have endeavoured to have gotten *Christ for my portion!* That his blood might have washed away my sins! and he might have been mine Advocate! I did *read* of *Judgment* to come; and those which made Gods word their rule, laid these things before me often. I read also a legacy *of a dying man* left with and bequeathed to the people of the land of his Nativity, as a *token of his love*, wherein he told me that God dealt in great severity against sin, and that those that had not an interest in Christ, were in a miserable and *undone condition.* Consider it, and know, that your eternal life lyeth upon your having, or *not having* this suffering of Christ applied to your particular persons. Is not this it which so many dying men have cried out for? which when the assu-

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rance thereof is obtained, how cheerfully can that man die! But when no well-grounded hope appears of having a propriety in that *redeeming justifying* work of Christs sufferings, it makes a dying bed to be like *Saul*'s sentence, 1 *Sam.* 28.20. *Terrible news.* To have *death* come *to take*, before there is assurance that *Christ* will *receive*, is a sad state.

Use 4. Was it so that the Lord did *humble himself to death*, that we might not die eternally? then *our ransom cost a great price*; it was *not silver and gold, but the precious blood of Jesus Christ*; 1 Pet. 1. 19. then let us be perswaded *to set a high price upon eternal life*, since it was obtained for man at such a rate, *Heb.* 5. 9. and not set so low a value upon it as many do, who will sell their souls, and all heavenly enjoyments for base things, sinful pleasures, unjust profits, *&c.* We count him very unwise that hath a rich *jewel*, and will sell it away for very trifles and base things. Friends! your life was lost, your *happiness* lost, and there was an *infinite price* paid, that you might have life, and have it in abundance, *Joh.* 10. and be happy for evermore: Oh then let not this life and happiness go, except you can have better enjoyments for it; until *sin* and *Satan*, and the *world* bid you as *much* as this life and happiness is *worth*, let them not deceive you of it. Be not so befooled as to sell life for *death*, joy

for *ſorrow*, glory for *ſhame*, heaven for *hell*; ſeeing there is an opportunity put into your hands to have and keep theſe enjoyments, then *buy the truth and ſell it not.* The way of *life is above to the wiſe, to depart from hell beneath*, Prov. 23. 23. and 17. 24.

Uſe 5. Hath this great Shepherd of the flock laid down his life for his *ſheep?* then he is the *good ſhepherd, hear his voice and follow him*, and he will lead you to the *green paſtures*, and have you to the *ſtill-waters*, *Joh.* 10. 11. *Pſal.* 23. 2. where you ſhall find *reſt to your ſouls.* Hear his voice and follow him, and he will give you eternal life, and ye ſhall never periſh, *Joh.* 10. 27. Is not here ſufficient encouragement? He laid down his life to purchaſe a *fold* of godly ones, he calls with *loving invitations*; he promiſeth that if they will come, there is *eternal life* for them, and they ſhall never periſh; one would think that no man nor woman in the world would *refuſe* to hear and obey his voice, but would readily ſay, *Lord, what wouldeſt thou have me to do?* But when Chriſt by his word is calling, by his word he informs them *what* it is that he would have them do, *Repent and be converted*, Act 3. 19. *Believe in Jeſus Chriſt, purifying the heart by faith*, Act 15. 9. *Cleanſe your hands ye ſinners, and purifie your hearts you double minded*, Jam. 4. 8. Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate wherein the little flock of Chriſt

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is preſſing, thorough many difficulties and hard uſages in the world. Now he that ſeeth ſo much excellency in Chriſt, and his precious *promiſes*, as to turn from his *vain converſation*, he muſt follow Chriſt in *all Goſpel-obedience* they that *continue in his word, are his diſciples indeed*, Joh. 8. 31. Which word doth declare the way of life in which we are to follow Chriſt: Therefore I ſhall give you *from that word* a few *Directions* how a ſoul muſt follow him, ſo as to enjoy thoſe Promiſes which are made to us through his ſufferings.

Direction 1.

We muſt follow him *in the way of ſelf denial*, we muſt deny *ſelf* before we can follow Chriſt, *Mat.* 16 24. *Mark* 8 34. and this is one reaſon, *That not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble are called*, 1 Cor. 1 26. They will not deny themſelves of their pomp, their *pride* and *voluptuous living*, and forſake the faſhions of this world, in turning from that *eaſie Religion* which is invented to pleaſe the fleſh, both of *Preachers* and hearers; as if the Chriſtian Religion were become ſo eaſie that a man might carry his *pleaſures* and *profits* with him: whereas *Paul* found it otherwiſe when he became a Chriſtian: for he ſaith, *I am crucified with Chriſt*, Gal 2. 20. The Lord to try the children of men, and for other excellent ends, hath ordained ſuch *Ordinances* and *appointments*, as there

muſt be much ſelf-denial before they can be imbraced; the Diſciple muſt follow his Lord in the way of humiliation, before he can be *glorified* with him. There is ſo much pride, luſt, worldly honour, and unjuſt gain, ſo much vanity both in *words* and *life* in a carnal ſtate, that will not admit any conformity to Chriſts will, until it be denied and abandoned; and men may ſay that they follow Chriſt, that will not deny theſe things, but live in them, and yet ſing *Requiems* to their ſouls. But they will find as ſure as Gods word is *true*, that the ſtrait-gate is too narrow for men thus laden to go in thereat; it will one day appear that it is only Chriſts *little ones* that can enter there, thoſe that humble themſelves like little children, who are weaned from the vanities of the world. The worlds great ones are too big to go in that narrow way.

2. Thoſe that will follow Chriſt muſt *learn of him, who went about doing good*, Act. 10 38. ſo muſt they be *uſeful in their day*, to all them among whom they live; as the Spirit invites, ſo the *Bride* muſt ſay, *Come, take of the waters of life freely*, Revel. 22. 17. Every ſincere Chriſtian would have his *neighbour* have eternal life with himſelf for their good for ever, though many times they are hated for their good-will; becauſe men being led by cuſtom and tradition, miſtake in ſpiritual things, and think that truth is error, and will not ſearch the Scriptures, and try

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all things, and ſo think that exhortations to receive the truth and walk therein, are *ſeducements*, and ſo they are not willing to hear, but lean upon, and are led by thoſe whoſe *ſelf* and *worldly intereſt* prevails with them to uphold an empty, formal eaſie way of *worſhip*, and a carnal looſe *converſation*, and that in oppoſition to plain diſcoveries of *Goſpel-truths*, which have zeal, and purity, ſpirituality, and a godly life, as unſeparable concomitants; but when ſouls will make trial between truth and error by that certain *rule* of Scripture, then will they know the truth as it is in Jeſus, and diſcern the ſpiritual nature of true Religion, and how God who is a *Spirit* muſt be worſhipped *in ſpirit and in truth*; then will they know, that an eaſie Religion which was invented to pleaſe the fleſh, is a *cheat* to the ſoul, and that the worſhip and ſervice pretended to be performed to God, that is *bought* and *ſold* for money, and done by rote and cuſtom, had never its inſtitution in Heaven. Therefore thoſe ſheep of Chriſt that follow him, as they are harmleſs in themſelves, ſo they endeavour to be *helpful* to others; for which they become ſtrangers to the world, as they are in the world, and meet with much oppoſition, as appears throughout all ages. For thoſe that were Gods ſervants, and would follow him, and perſwade others ſo to do, were ever counted the troublers of the Nations they lived in, 1 *King.* 18. 17. *Turners of the world upſide down*,

down, Act. 17. 6. *Peſtilent fellows*, Act. 24. 5. and whatſoever malice could invent was laid to their charge.

3. As we muſt deny our ſelves, and learn of Chriſt to walk after him, improving our Talents, ſo we muſt be *conſtant and continual followers of him*; we muſt *follow the lamb whitherſoever he goeth*, Revel. 14. 4. Some will follow him when the *Sun* of proſperity ſhines, when worldly intereſt is not endangered, nor the way troubleſome; but if other things appear, then they are at a ſtand. Others when in an afflictive diſpenſation, a poor and low ſtate, then they will follow Chriſt; but if Providence advance their portion, then theſe worldly enjoyments become impediments to ſtop them; when thoſe priviledges ſhould have been ſo many incouragements to *perſeverance*: for ſo will a gracious ſoul take all advantages, whether by *hills* or *vallies* to keep a ſight in their ſouls of their Lords goings; they will not ſtop when they meet with a temptation, but ſtrive by *prayer*, and aſcend by *faith* into the *mount*, where the Lord is ſeen, and renew their ſtrength, and increaſe their *joy*, and get new experiences of ſtrength from on high, which being obtained ſharpens their reſolutions of ſtedfaſt perſeverance, and brings them to their expected end.

4. We muſt *walk as he walked*, 1 Joh. 2. 6. who kept his Fathers Commandments, *Joh.* 15. 10. This is of neceſſity that we keep thoſe Heavenly pre-

precepts that are delivered unto us; this is the way that we muſt follow Chriſt in, or elſe we are out of the way of life, and follow not the Lord, *Pſal.* 119.32. and as men that miſtake their way, the further and faſter they go, the more they are amiſs; ſo when there is a miſtake about ſpiritual things, *cuſtom* breeds *ſecurity*, and ſecurity reſolvedneſs, and then it is hard to convince them of their miſtake. There hath been throughout all ages that which hath had the name of *worſhip* imprinted on it by men, which was not commanded by the Lord, either to ſerve ſomething which was *not God*, or ſomething pretended *to be of God*, which he never appointed. *Terah* the Father of *Abraham* ſerved other gods, *Joſh.* 24 2. he made (ſay ſome) Images of *clay*, and worſhipped them, therefore it is ſuppoſed that God ſmote his Son *Haran* that he died before his Father, which was the *firſt* that we read of that died a natural death before their fathers; for as for *Abel* he was ſlain, *Gen* 4.28. How many times did *Iſrael* ſet up Idolworſhip, deceiving and being deceived! the Scribes and Phariſees tranſgreſſed the Commandments of God by their Traditions, *Matt.* 15.3. yet theſe did *own* in words the God of *Iſrael* for the only God, and yet had Chriſts *wo* pronounced againſt them, *Matt* 23.13. And in the Primitive times, there were falſe Doctrines taught, and falſe *principles* held, *Rev.* 2.14,20. ſo we may note that among them that had ſome priviledges

and profeſſion, therehath been ſteppings aſide from *the right ways* of God; *Terah* was of the line of *Shem*, *Iſrael* were Gods people by profeſſion; the Scribes and Phariſees were of moſt fame amongſt the *Jews* for Religion; and thoſe *Churches* which thoſe great Apoſtles *planted* and *watered*, were moſt like to be free from error; and yet *all theſe* have had ſome that have turned aſide into *by-ways* which God did not appoint. Then very poſſible it is for men in this age to miſtake, who live further from thoſe primitive gifts, and under the revivings out of darkneſs; for it is ſufficiently known, that not many generations ſince this, and moſt *Nations* called *Chriſtendom*, or the *civilized world*, were a den of Popiſh *darkneſs* and *ignorance*; and it is a rich mercy that there is ſo much *light* as we enjoy, but theſe things conſidered, then how much need is there that all men and women ſhould look very diligently into Gods word, that rule for *faith* and *life*, leſt they miſtake about the Commandments of God, and take inſtead of them the *inſtitutions of men*, which God will not own. The Phariſees were great and *learned*; and in thoſe many hundred years there were many great and learned men whilſt *Popery* lay before men as the only Chriſtian Religion; and thoſe Nations where it is ſtill owned, are not without learning and learned Schoolmen; ſo that it is not ſafe to take any thing without *trial*, that is of ſo great concernment as eternal life; not to truſt in

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man, nor implicitely believe as they believe, nor do as they do, becauſe they do ſo: But to have a ground from Gods word witneſſing with your conſciences that it is *true*, and be ſearching the Scriptures, and pray with uprightneſs of heart to be directed into that good and old way where *reſt* is to be found. O how can ſuch perſons poſſible find the truth of God, that will not conſider their ways, nor Gods Word, nor with thirſting-ſouls pray to be *guided* by his Counſel, but will walk by other ſteps, and as they are they will be, though in never ſo much danger; they will do as *moſt* do, though they read that *many* go the broad way, and that the Church of Chriſt is called a *little flock*. There is alſo a world which *Paul* implies are in a ſtate of condemnation, 1 *Cor.* 11. 32. for whom Chriſt did not pray, *John* 17. 9. And *he* or *ſhe* that cannot prove themſelves to be a *member* of Chriſt's *Body*, which is his *Church*, muſt acknowledg himſelf or her ſelf to be of the *world*, except they will blot out many ſayings in their *Bibles*; and if Chriſt be their *head*, there will be ſome Analogie between them and him. Is the *head* pure, holy, juſt and merciful? then whoſoever are *members* of that body, are in their meaſure *ſo*; and whoſoever is carnal, unjuſt, mercyleſs, or unholy, is not of that body; or if in profeſſion, yet it is but a withered branch: there is not ſo little difference between real members of Chriſt's body and worldly men, as many by their *lives*

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ſeem to judg: there is more difference then only a few differing *Opinions*; and thoſe that make in their lives ſuch a ſmal *diſtinction* as can be but a little diſcerned, will never be ſeparated far aſunder in the *life to come*. Be intreated to follow the Lord *fully*, like *Caleb* and *Joſhua*, to whom it was ſaid, that they ſhould enter into the land, *Num.* 14. 24. *Halt not between two opinions*, nor make opinion your *Religion*; this is very dangerous, and deceives many, when they get ſome opinions of truth, and reſt there, and ſtay under the ſhadow of their conceptions, and never obtain to *true godlineſs*: being ſo like the multitude in language and *life*, that they will not be known aſunder, unleſs by the aggravations of their ſins, being againſt more means of knowledg, which will be a ſad difference at the Reſurrection.

Uſe 6. Here is *comfort for all the godly* that have a Portion in Chriſt's ſacrifice; if the Lord have *pay d a ranſom* for them, then they the *ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return and come to Zion, with ſongs and everlaſting joy upon their heads, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away*, Iſa. 35. 10. therefore *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, ſaith your God, your iniquity is pardoned*; Iſa. 4. 1. There is ſuch comfort in this conſideration, that Chriſt is made unto us *wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. That poor drooping ſouls have much

much cauſe of encouragement that their ſins are pardonable when they are repented of, becauſe this wonderful ſacrifice was of ſuch an *infinite value to the remitting of many and great ſins*, Luke 7. 47. *her ſins which are many are forgiven her.* If poor diſtreſſed ſouls would conſider that the Lord ſaw them *ſinful*, and came to be their *righteouſneſs*, he beheld them *wounded* and came to *heal* them; then they that knowing they have repented for ſins paſt, reſolve for time to come to walk in obedience to the Lord to the utmoſt of their abilities; they may then be exceedingly refreſhed in their minds, that their ſins ſhall not be *charged* on them to condemnation, ſeeing he hath provided himſelf a ſacrifice of ſuch ſufficiency; ſome will preſumptuouſly conclude their ſins pardoned, without *ground*; other poor wounded ſouls look ſo much upon the filthy nature of ſin, the hardneſs of their own hearts, their *deadneſs* in ſpiritual things, that they are like to be drowned in *deſpair*, and to think that God will not have mercy on ſuch ſinful and miſerable creatures as they are: but dear hearts, remember for your comfort, that it is a ſign that thou art a child of Grace, becauſe thy ſins are thy *burden*, in that thou art grieved with an hard heart, and mourneſt becauſe thou art no more ſpiritual, labouring thine heart to a better frame; be encouraged to go to God in *Faith*, and in the aſſurance of his *Promiſe* thou may-

mayeſt humbly plead with him that he hath promiſed to make *a new heart, and renew a right ſpirit within them*, Ezek. 36. 26. Go ſoul! beg an intereſt in this Promiſe; if the Lord do not preſently give thee thine hearts deſire, give not over praying, nor waiting, nor let thine heart conclude that the Lord doth not regard thee; Chriſt both heard and regarded the woman that ſought unto him, and yet he made her *no anſwer*; but, ſhe not willing ſo to be denyed, came and worſhipped him, and he ſeems as if he would have put her off again, but ſhe continues pleading with him; then he ſays unto her, *O woman great is thy faith*, Mat. 15. 23. It is acceptable when a mournful ſoul will wait believingly on him, and take notice of every drop of mercy and kindneſs that the Lord ſhowers down upon them, and not murmur in their waiting becauſe they have not ſo much as they would, nor ſo ſoon as they would; know, O praying mourning ſoul, that God who freely gave his beloved Son without asking, will ſurely give thee that Grace and Spiritual life that he will accept thee in through him, if thou continue in thine integrity, and laboureſt to keep thine heart from unbelief, and thy ſins ſubdued, and thy ſelf in Gods way with a holy life to the utmoſt of thy power received from him; but if any ſhall expect comfort from God in a way that God never appointed, or in a vain worldly-minded converſation, they will but deceive

ceive themſelves, they may ſtand out with God, and not conform to his will until the motions of Grace leave *checking*, and then the conſcience may be quiet, and it may be *die ſo*, and yet in a *woful ſtate*; but you that are willing to have peace on Gods own terms, conſider, the Lord doth not expect impoſſibilities of his creatures, 2 Cor. 8. 12. he that put in thee thoſe good deſires of a better heart, a better life, thoſe mournings after God, longing to be fitted with larger abilities to ſerve the Lord in a more devout and holy manner, will not leave thee here to weep thy ſelf to Hell; no ſoul! hold up thine *head* and *heart*, though thou *walkeſt in darkneſs and can ſee no light, yet truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon thy God*, Iſa. 50. 10. the Lord counſels thee to do ſo, and by the ſame *Prophet* ſaith; *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy on him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon*; *for my thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor my ways as your ways*, Iſa. 55. 7. if the Lord promiſe pardoning-mercy to wicked men that turn to him, ſhall not a ſoul that is convinced of ſin, and ſo broken that it goeth mourning all the day long, and would rejoice at the obtaining a better frame of heart, to walk with God with great joy; ſhall not this ſoul find mercy with this merciful God? doth he ſay, *how ſhall I give thee up, O Ephrain? how ſhall I deliver thee up Iſrael? mine heart is turned within me:* as if he ſhould ſay, mine

heart

heart ſaith ſpare him, my bowels ſay deſtroy him not, *I am God and not man*, Hoſ. 11. 8. his mercy is the mercy of a *God*, his pity is the pity of a God; broken ſouls are apt to look upon the mercy and pity of God to be beneath the attribute of an *infinite God*, as preſumptuous ſinners do of his *Juſtice*: ſo tender hearts have too ſhort a ſight of his infinite Love in Chriſt Jeſus, they have a *Portion* in their Fathers houſe, the *Robe* and the *Ring*; but they ſee themſelves ſo unworthy, they dare not fetch it, they ſtand afar off weeping and mourning, and Satan the *accuſer of the brethren*, labours to perſwade them that there is no acceptance of perſon, nor duty; and the poor hearts are ready to think ſo, being vile in their *own eyes*, not ſufficiently looking upon *Chriſt crucified*, and in him all *fulneſs*, in whom God was *reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their ſins*, 2 Cor. 5. 19 They yet being as babes, have not the fulneſs of Faith like their father *Abraham*, who *againſt hope believed in hope, and it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs*, Rom. 4. 18. Did you ever read of any *repenting* perſon that did forſake ſin, and in true ſincerity of heart went humbly before the Lord to deſire pardon and aſſiſting Grace to ſerve him in truth and with a perfect heart; that the Lord ſent any Prophet or Apoſtle to tell him that there was *no mercy* for him? doth not that noble company of Prophets and Apoſtles as with *one voice* proclaim *Peace* to *ſuch* through Faith in Chriſt? and wilt not thou *believe them*? doſt thou think thou art dealt more ſeverely with than all others under Heaven? I hope thou wilt have no ſuch thoughts lodged in thine heart: therefore when thou art tempted to diſtruſt, harken not to thine own heart which is *deceitful*, but to Gods Word, and hear what there is ſaid, *He that cometh unto me I will in no wiſe caſt out*, John 6. 37.

And

And as he is willing to ſanctifie and ſave you, ſo he is able to do it to the utmoſt, *Heb.* 7. 25. O! then may a poor ſoul ſay, how great is this Love of God, that he ſhould give himſelf to be a Portion for ſuch a worm as I! that he ſhould give his Son to die, that his body ſhould be *meat* and his blood *drink indeed* to my poor ſoul! it was a wonder that he did not feed ſuch a ſinful creature with *Gall* and *Wormwood*, with fire and brimſtone, and cloath him with flames: But that he ſhould give a portion of *Grace* here, and a ſure promiſe of *Glory* hereafter; he that is Mighty hath done for us *great things, and holy is his Name*, the Lord is our Portion, *The lines are fallen to us in a pleaſant place, we have a goodly heritage*; therefore return unto your reſt, Oh our ſouls! for the *Lord hath dealt bountifully with us*; *enter into the chamber, ſhut the door, reſt for a little moment until the indignation be over-paſt*, Pſal. 16. 6. Iſa. 26 20.

Motive 1. To move us to be affected with a portion in the Lord, an intereſt in his deareſt Relations to believing ſouls, conſider that *in him is life, and his life is the light of men*, John 1. 4. he is the true light to them that ſit in darkneſs; If a man were ſhut up in a dungeon of darkneſs from the light of the Sun, men would pity his condition; how much more terrible is it for to be without the *Sun of righteouſneſs*, in ſpiritual darkneſs, to have a dark underſtanding? *Epheſ.* 4. 18. a dark conſcience wherein ſin lieth hid for want of light? promiſes are not diſcerned, things of the Spirit of God are ſtrange things to ſuch a ſoul; but when Chriſt is received, he is as *a Sun and a Shield*, Pſal. 84. 11. and doth ſet up an heavenly light that guides to eternal life, whereby ſpiritual things are diſcerned to be only deſirable, 1 *Cor.* 2. 15.

Mot. 2. Adoption in Chriſt brings *true laſting Peace*, and *ſound joy*; as he ſaith, that *in me ye might have peace*,

peace, John 16. 33. men count a peaceable life in this world a great privilege, to live without disturbance and vexations; but that is not certain nor durable; whereas *this peace* no man can take away, it is *joy unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 18. a peace that *passeth understanding*, that will feed and comfort the soul in all distresses, when men persecute, in sickness and pains, when friends frown, &c. then this peace holds the heart calm and temperate; yea when death comes, it will be such a *sweet cordial* to the soul that will make it comfortable, and will rise with it in the *Resurrection*, and then this peace and joy will be full.

Mot. 3. When Christ is *ours and we are his*, received by us as our *Prophet*, of whom we have learned the mysteries of Salvation; when he rules in our hearts as *Prince* of life, and is by faith depended on for justification unto life; as our *high Priest, who hath offered up himself a sacrifice* to God for the remission of sins, and is at the *right hand of God making intercession for us*; when he shall return, from thence he will bring *Glory and Honour* with him; and having received for himself a *Kingdom*, the whole body of his *Elect* shall be gathered unto him by the *holy Angels* in their morning-Glory and Heavenly dress of white Robes, to celebrate the *marriage of the Lamb, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God*, Luk. 12. 29. and shall injoy all those precious promises of eternal happiness declared from the foundation of the world, which hath been the *joy* of believers in all ages who lived and died in faith, that they through that *Lamb of God* who is their righteousness, should come to *that city* which hath eternal foundations, *whose builder is God*, and there should sing praises with unspeakable delight unto the Lord God almighty. and to the *Lamb* for their wonderful redemption, and everlasting salvation world without end. *Amen. Hallelujah.*

FINIS.